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Al Makin

Representing the Enemy

Musaylima in Muslim Literature

PETER LANG

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The System of Transliteration

ب	=	b	ذ	=	dh	ط	=	ṭ	ل	=	l
ت	=	t	ر	=	r	ظ	=	ẓ	م	=	m
ث	=	th	ز	=	z	ع	=	ʿ	ن	=	n
ج	=	j	س	=	s	غ	=	gh	ه	=	h
ح	=	ḥ	ش	=	sh	ف	=	f	و	=	w
خ	=	kh	ص	=	ṣ	ق	=	q	ي	=	y
د	=	d	ض	=	ḍ	ك	=	k	أ	=	ʾ

The [P]rophet refers to the Prophet Muḥammad, whereas the [p]rophet refers to claimant to prophethood other than him. The [Q]urʾān refers to the standard Muslim Qurʾān, whereas the [q]uʾrān designates other such Composition.

ABBREVIATIONS

AO	: *Archiv Orientálí*
AO[2]	: *Acta Oreintalia*
b.	: ibn/ a son of
BJMES	: *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
BSOAS	: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
bt.	: ibnah/a daughter of
BW	: *The Biblical World*
Concordance	: *Concordance et indices de la Tradition Musulmane: les six livres, le Musnad d'al-Darimi, le Muwatta' de Malik, le Musnad de Ahmad ibn Hanbal/al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras li alfāẓ al-ḥadīth al-nabawī* (A. J. Wensinck/Leiden: Brill, 1943)
DWO	: *Die Welt des Orients*
EI[1]	: *Encyclopedia of Islam* (first edition/Brill)
EI[2]	: *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edition/Brill)
EJ	: *Encyclopedia of Judaica*
EP	: *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
EQ	: *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān* (ed. J. McAuliffe/Brill)
FO	: *Folia Orientalia*
GAL	: *Geschichte des arabische Litteratur* (Carl Brockelmann/Brill)
GAS	: *Geschichte des arabische Schrifttums* (Fuat Sezgin/Brill)
HI	: *Hamdard Islamicus*
IC	: *Islamic Culture*
IOS	: *Israel Oriental Studies*
IQ	: *Islamic Quarterly: A Review of Islamic Culture*
JA	: *Journal Asiatique*
JAL	: *Journal of Arabic Literature*
JESHO	: *Journal of Economy and Social History of the Orient*
JINEL	: *Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law*
JNES	: *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies*
JRAS	: *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
Lisān	: *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Ibn Manẓūr)
ME	: *Medieval Encounters*
MES	: *Middle Eastern Studies*
NEC	: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*
RdSO	: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
RN	: *Revue Numismatique*
SI	: *Studia Islamica*
SEI	: *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam* (Brill)
WM	: *The Muslim World*
ZDMG	: *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

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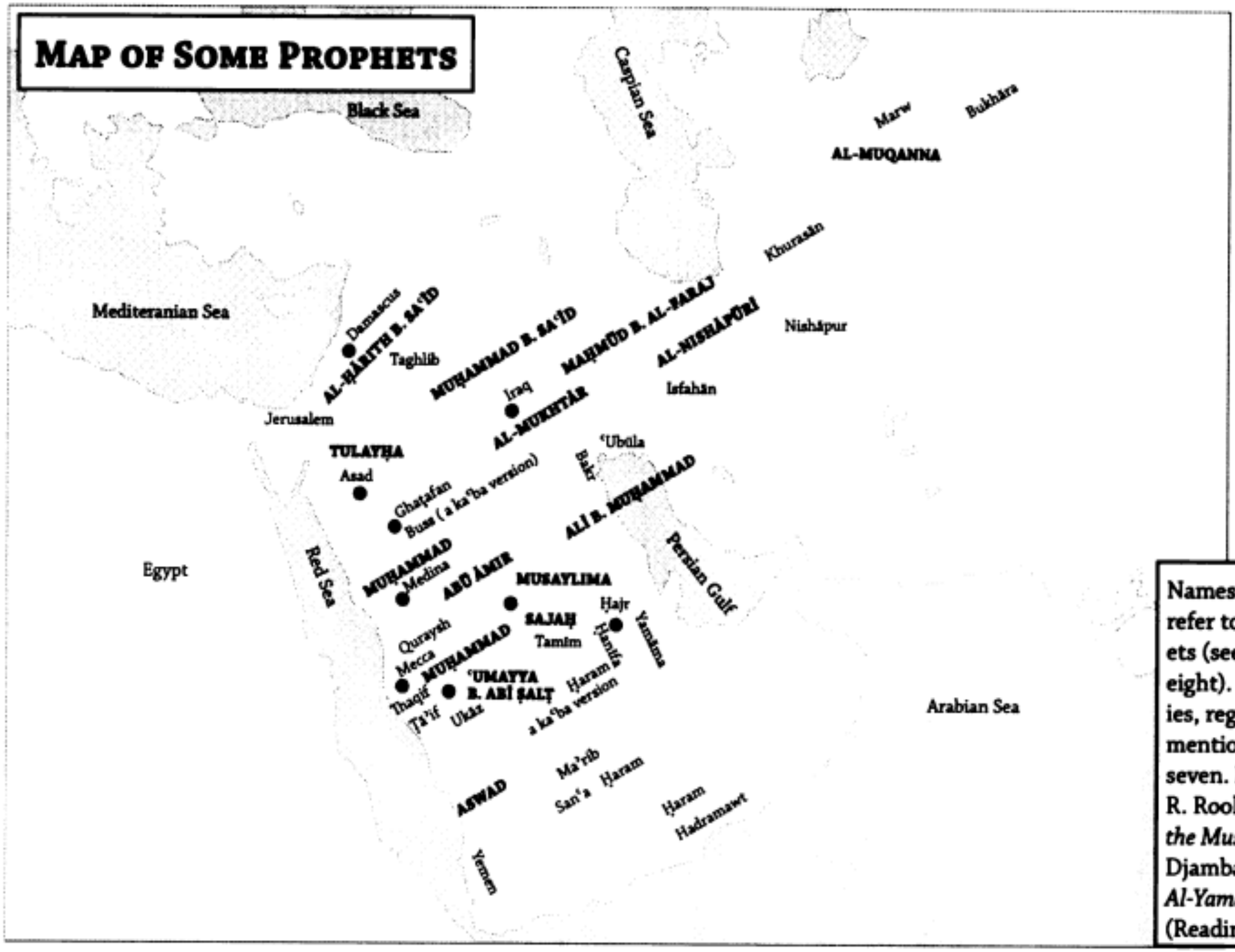
Needless to say, in spite of my great debt to so many people, I must acknowledge that everything written here is my responsibility alone.

Map of Some Prophets



Names written in capital letters refer to those of some prophets (see prologue and chapter eight). For the names of the cities, regions, *harams*, and tribes mentioned above, see chapter seven. My modification based on R. Roolvink, *Historical Atlas of the Muslim Peoples* (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1957) and al-Askar, *Al-Yamama in the Early Islamic Era* (Reading: Ithaca, 2002).

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YOGYAKARTA

PROLOGOUE

This book is about Musaylima, another claimant to prophethood during the Prophet Muḥammad's lifetime. Whereas Muḥammad centered his religious activities in both Mecca and Medina, Musaylima served as a prophet for his people, the tribe Ḥanīfa in Yamāma. However, unlike Islam which survives until today, Musaylima's cult disappeared a long time ago.

The following study is, indeed, a new departure compared to the many studies that have dealt with the themes on early Islam, Muḥammad and the Qur'ān. The story of Musaylima can be seen here as a fresh window onto the history of the Arabs in that period, providing a vision that is different from those that others have offered. Interestingly, Musaylima's followers—none of whom survived—have left no record that has come down to us. In fact, our knowledge of this figure comes from accounts that Musaylima's enemies, namely the early Muslims, have narrated.[1] As such, studying him involves studying early Muslim sources but adopting a rather different perspective, reading as much between the letters as the lines. This becomes clear when one poses the question about how Muslim narrators have represented Musaylima, their nemesis. Certainly, the point of departure in this study is Musaylima, the focus here is not Muḥammad, Islam, or the Qur'ān, although these three subjects will play critical roles in our inquiry.

1 Interestingly enough, the story of Musaylima is not dead, but very much alive today. Although Musaylima was defeated once and for all since fifteen hundred years ago, his figure has endured in many genres of Muslim literature until the present day. In fact, many consider the danger that Musaylima represented to still be threatening for Muslims; it is as if he were still challenging The Prophethood, the miracles, and the Qur'ān that Muḥammad revealed. Thus, this study of Musaylima is relevant in the present day context with regard to Muslim theological doctrines.

So far, scholars of *sīra* literature (biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad), *tārīkh* (historiography), *ṭabaqāt* (biographies of early Muslim prominent figures), *ḥadīth* literature (tradition), and *tafsīr* (Qurʾānic exegesis) have treated the story of Musaylima as if it were of secondary importance. In the works of these scholars, Musaylima is a relatively unimportant figure, and plays no significant role in the history of late sixth and early seventh century Arabia. His role is a marginal one when compared to those of Muḥammad, his Companions, and the caliphs. In short, the figure of Musaylima has been neglected, ignored and overlooked for one and a half millennia. However, I would argue that he was indeed an important figure, a fact that becomes apparent if we appreciate the unique role that he played in that period in central Arabia. The claim that he made to be a prophet can be compared to Muḥammad's own. In this regard, Musaylima's story can perhaps serve as a piece of the 'puzzle' for those who have sought to explain the enigmatic birth of Islam in at least two respects. Firstly, Musaylima was a contemporary of Muḥammad, both of whom sought to carry out more or less the same mission, that is, prophet to the Arabs. Secondly, Musaylima's story can be used as a clue that gives us valuable insights into the history of early Islam. This enables us to illuminate the accounts of the earliest stage of Islam in comparison to Musaylima's cult, helping us relate some religious traditions—e.g. Arab pagan tradition, Judaism, and Christianity—to the emergence of Arabian prophethood.

Unfortunately, no material evidence whatsoever has yet been found to confirm of Musaylima's existence as a historical person. Nor does any non-Arabic source support this assumption. In fact, Musaylima—in all genres of Muslim literature—was quickly transformed into the mere 'concept' of an enemy, which has endured in Muslim literature ever since. It is even tempting to say that his existence or non-existence is immaterial.

At the very least, his story helps us to understand the tactics said to have been adopted by Muḥammad—and later caliphs—in facing his rival prophets. To accomplish this, I will present comparisons between the Qurʾān revealed by Muḥammad and that of Musaylima, between Islam and Musaylima's cult, and between the basic teachings of Islam and those of Musaylima. So far, no careful study of this subject has been performed.[2] As such, the following study

[2] So far, many have studied early Islam and attempted to reveal the influences of Christianity and Judaism. On the influences of Christianity on Islam, see, for instance, Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment* (London: Cass, 1968); Günter Lüling, *Der christliche Kult and der vorislamichen Kaaba als Problem der Islamwissenchaft und christlichen Theologie* (Erlangen: Lüling, 1977); idem, *Die Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muḥammad, Eine Kritik am "christlichen" Abendland* (Erlangen: Lüling, 1981); idem, *Über den Urkoran, Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion der vorislamisch-christlichen Strophenlieder im Koran* (Erlangen: Lüling, 2004). On the influences of Judaism on Islam, see, for instance, Charles Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* (New York: Ktv Publication House, 1967); Abraham I. Katsh, *Judaism in Islam, Biblical and Talmudic Backgrounds of the Koran and Its Commentaries* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Pr., 1980). John E. Wansbrough sharpens this stance by employing the terms—e.g., Haggadic or Masoteric that Jewish studies have commonly used — to view early Islamic

on Musaylima will shed new light on the picture of early Islam, the history of the early Qur'ān; and the relation of Islam to indigenous Arab paganism.

Sources

In unearthing the story of Musaylima, we will explore it across the following genres of Muslim literature: 1. *sīra;* 2. *maghāzī* (the Prophet's campaigns); 3. *tārīkh;* 4. *ṭabaqāt;* 5. *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of the revelation of the Qur'ān); 6. *tafsīr;* 7. *iʿjāz al-Qur'ān* (inimitability of the Qur'ān); 8. *dalā'il al-nubuwwa* (proofs of prophethood); and 9. *rijāl al-hadīth* (biographies of the transmitters of *ḥadith*). To illustrate this point: the story of the visit of Musaylima to Medina and his letter to Muḥammad can be found in *sīra, ṭabaqāt, ḥadīth, tārīkh* and *maghāzī* literature, whereas only *tārīkh* literature preserves the stories of his defeat at the Battle of Yamāma. Thirty-three fragments of Musaylima's qur'ān are preserved by *tārīkh, iʿjāz,* and *dalā'il* literature, while *tārīkh, sīra, ṭabaqāt,* and *rijāl al-ḥadīth* literature record the only information concerning Musaylima's followers and opponents. Unfortunately, we have no single early source that places a complete life of Musaylima at our disposal.

Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995 or 388/998) reports in his *Fihrist* that Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (120/737-204/819) composed a book entitled *Kitāb Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb*.[3] There is no clue, however, as to whether this work covered the whole life of Musaylima, nor his tribal origins, or only the later story about his defeat as told in *tārīkh* literature. Nor is there any indication

tradition. See his *Qur'ānic Studies, Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). However, most of the arguments presented in these studies have been more inferential than evidential, as there is so far hardly any convincing evidence that suggests direct influence by either older religion on Islam. Thus, the relationship between Islam and the two older religions may very well be an indirect one. See, for instance, Sidney Griffith, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān: the "Companions of the Cave" in Surat al-Kahf and in Syriac Christian Tradition" in *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2007) 109-137. Griffith compares the story of 'the seven sleepers' contained in the Christian Syriac sources and that of the Qur'ān. There, she argues that the Qur'ān did not literally borrow the story from these sources, but rather the Scripture shows a response to it, where the Arab audience whom the Scripture addressed was already familiar with the story. This study, therefore, suggests an indirect relationship between the Qur'ān and these sources with regard to the same story that both evoke.

For sure, the distance spanning—in terms of place and time—between the two older Semitic religions and Islam was significantly wide. The comparison, however, should be made between Islam and the cults which emerged at the time and space close to this religion. In this regard, I would like to argue that some Arab prophets—whose names we will discuss in chapter eight below—may have blended certain indigenous Arab pagan traditions with the elements of Judaism and Christianity. Islam and Musaylima's cult were born in this milieu. Thus, comparing Islam and Musaylima's cult is more relevant than comparing Islam and two older religious traditions directly.

[3] Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Beirut: Maktaba Khayyāt, n.d.) 97; Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen Frühislmischer Geschichtüberlieferung, Teil 1: Themen und Formen* (Bonn: Selbtsverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Unviersität Bonn, 1973) 31.

whatsoever that later Muslim scholars based their accounts on any parts of al-Kalbī's work. Given this fact, we will have to reconstruct the story of Musaylima, on the basis of various scattered and fragmentary reports.

It is noteworthy that all of these sources treated Musaylima as an antagonistic figure. Almost no writer treats him fairly as an independent subject or a person. His presence in the story is regarded as a threat to the main figures, i.e., Muḥammad, his Companions, or the caliphs. Additionally, later Muslim and Western scholars have perpetuated this attitude in their works where they have dealt with *sīra* and *tārīkh*.[4]

It is interesting that Abdullah al-Askar's account of Yamāma[5] pays special attention to the political role that Musaylima played in Central Arabia. Al-Askar counts him among those who used the sentiment of regionalism in Yamāma to support their religious and political movement. Still, this sentiment, according to al-Askar, gave rise to many religious and political leaders in the region, ranging from Hawdha b. ʿAlī, Musaylima, the Kharijite Najda b. ʿĀmir, to later Wahhabi leaders. However, Askar still positions Musaylima as a mere antagonistic character who acted as an obstacle to the religious mission of the main character, the Prophet Muḥammad. Musaylima's prophethood, likewise, is also seen as a mere rebellious movement against Medina.

The latest endeavor to unearth the story of Musaylima has been that of Kister,[6] whose work on the sources has guided me towards further reading. Basing himself on an abundance of early Muslim material, Kister offers a more complete story of Musaylima—ranging from his birthplace, pedigree, prophethood, failed miracle, and verses, to his defeat by Muslim forces at the Battle of Yamāma. Kister, in this regard, presents many stories that were left untold by previous studies. However, the style that Kister employs in telling the story of Musaylima is too close to the prevailing view and ignores many vital issues with regard to the figure of Musaylima, his qurʾān, and his rivalry in prophethood with Muḥammad, not to mention how the stories about him have evolved or have been condensed at the hands of later Muslim transmitters over a period of centuries. The following questions remain unanswered, e.g.: How do we position Musaylima's image in the production of Muslim li-

[4] Margoliouth, however, has paid special attention to the relationship between Muḥammad and Musaylima. See D. S. Margoliouth, "The Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf," *JRAS* 35 (1903); idem, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (London: G. P. Putnams's Son, 1906) 81. Musaylima is also dealt with briefly in several encyclopedia articles, e.g., F. R. Buhl, "Musailima," *EI*[1]; W. M. Watt, "Musaylima" in *EI*[2]; Kister, "Musaylima" in *EQ*. Eickelman has tried to treat Musaylima independently in an article, without however providing much in the way of sources or analysis. See Dale F. Eickelman, "Musaylima, An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia" *JESHO* 10 (1967).

[5] Abdullah al-Askar, *al-Yamama in the Early Islamic Era* (Reading: Ithaca, 2002).

[6] Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002). See also a review on Kister's work by Sellheim, "Zu M. J. Kister's Struggle against Musaylima" in *DWO* 35 (2005): 158-168.

terature? In what context has the story of Musaylima been told? How reliable are these sources? How can we differentiate between less reliable and more reliable sources? Since exegetical tendencies and mythological elements were never absent from early story telling, the evolution and condensation of the story from one generation to another requires an explanation. One also fails to find answers to the following questions in both al-Askar's and Kister's works: Which Musaylima is being narrated? Whose version is being told, and by which transmitter? What is the meaning behind the myth and mythologizing? My study will therefore try to fill the above gaps left by both Kister and al-Askar.

Methodological Issues

The following are some of the critical questions that have led me to this inquiry: Is it possible for Muslim narrators to fairly represent Musaylima, their enemy?[7] To what extent has the distortion been involved in that representation, and over a long period of time? How reliable is the information provided by these narrators who regard the subject as an enemy? In addressing these questions, I consider the possibility that the negative image attributed to Musaylima has resulted from certain acts of communication, between him and Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, and Khālid b. al-Walīd, as preserved by Muslim literature. Indeed, numerous genres of Muslim literature have always portrayed Musaylima as an enemy, so much so that he literally earned the label of *ʿaduww Allah*/the enemy of God. This study will also deal with the reports that maintain Musaylima's negative image in detail.

Later scholars in Islamic studies have of course raised critical methodological questions, particularly as to the reliability of these *riwāyas* (reports)—be they contained in *ḥadīth* collections, *tārīkh*, *sīra*, or *tafsīr* literature—in telling the stories that are assumed to have happened one or two centuries prior to the writing. Some have subscribed to the view that Arabic literature—originating in the second century after the Hijra and yet containing information relating to events that took place one or two centuries earlier—is mere mythological and exegetical materials.

7 The key word 'representation' here refers to the term that Edward Said uses in his *Orientalism* in analyzing the representation of the 'East' by the 'West.' See his *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Book, 1979) 49-73. The other key word 'enemy' is taken from the portrayal of Musaylima available in Muslim literature (see chapter eight below). Additionally, the word 'representation', indeed, has played a vital role in the discussion of hermeneutics, in which Gadamer provides many examples in the works of art—including pictures, dramas, plays, and many others which are seen as nothing but an attempt of representation of certain reality (note also some related words Darstellung/mimesis/imitation). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I, Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philsophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986) 118; *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2003) 113; see also Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermenuetics, Tradition and Reason* (Cambridge: Polity Presss, 1987). In short, this study is devoted to the image of Musaylima which resulted from the representation by his enemies.

As such, many scholars have taken a skeptical view of the reliability of these Arabic sources.[8] If one adopts this skeptical attitude regarding these sources, the following question may be raised: How can one plausibly reconstruct the history of the late sixth or early seventh century of the Arabian peninsula while ignoring the narratives of the indigenous people? Against this backdrop, Patricia Crone has attempted to present non-Arabic sources,[9] whose more profound insights Robert Hoyland in turn illuminates.[10] Christoph Luxenberg also attempts to read the text of the Qur'ān from the perspective of Syriac language.[11]

Some have also called on scholars whose aim is to discover the history of the Arabs in that period to present material evidence that can be used as a foundation for their arguments.[12] However, the material evidence—e.g., manuscripts, monuments, graffiti, and coins—is not abundant, and very limited when compared with the large amount of stories preserved by sīra, tārīkh, ḥadīth, and tafsīr literature. Needless to say, one also needs to interpret material evidence, and no one can do so without basing his interpretation on the pre-assumption-history constructed in his mind.[13] In fact, each

[8] To mention just a few names: I. Goldziher, J. Schacht, P. Crone, M. Cook, J. Wansbrough, and G.H.A. Juynboll. However, it is not necessary to present each view in detail here, as many have already done so. See, for instance, the many summaries provided by Fred M. Donner and Gregor Schoeler in the introductions of their works below. See also the analysis provided by Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000). The view of these scholars will be discussed at the appropriate place in this study.

[9] Patricia Crone and Micheal A. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[10] Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997).

[11] Christoph Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 2000). Recent journalistic works have paid great attention to this work and Lüling's The Ur-Koran. In this vein, the hypothesis that both Lexenburg and Lüling have proposed was used for the purpose of criticizing Islam and present-day Muslim society. In response, many scholarly articles—included in The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context, ed. Reynolds—revisit the supposed Syriac influences on the Arabic Qur'ān.

[12] Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins, The Beginning of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998).

[13] Pre-assumptions of certain construction of history have played a central role for many of those who have interpreted material evidence. Let us take two contrasting arguments which different writers have built upon material evidence. On the one hand, basing themselves on the examination of material evidence, Nevo and Koren defend the skeptical approach in treating the Early Muslim literature. According to the two, due to insufficient evidence, one cannot prove the historical person of Muḥammad and the authenticity of the Qur'ān, among other things. See Yehuda D. Nevo and Judith Koren, *Crossroads to Islam, The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2003). On the other hand, Azami 'apologetically' uses some material evidences to guard the beliefs of Islamic orthodoxy concerning the reliability of Early Muslim sources; at the same time he rejects any critical questions that both Western and Muslim scholars have posed regarding the authenticity of these sources. See, M. M. al-Azami, *The History of the Qur'ānic Text, from Revelation*

finding—be it a lengthy narrative contained in a poem or a few unclear words carved in stone—will never replace the role played by the other, as each contributes in its own way to the reconstruction of certain events.[14]

Others, however, have tried to appreciate the way in which Muslim scholars themselves have established traditional methodological tools to examine the authenticity of certain reports.[15] In this regard, they have developed certain tools of analysis to read closely the sources written by early Muslim scholars. By doing so, scholars have been able to date the sources and to extend certain stories back to their originators.[16]

With regard to my own attitude toward the sources that Muslim scholars wrote one or more centuries after the event, I adopt an open-minded view. I attempt as much as possible to be critical regarding the authenticity of these sources, but not agnostic to the values that they may offer.[17] To illustrate, I question the reliability of every report that I present in this study: these reports can be dated and traced back to their originators. I anticipate at least two probabilities: certain parts of reports that contain exegetical elements can perhaps be detected. However, I do not reject the other probability that certain reports may somehow preserve the key ideas of certain older messages, as other reports corroborate it. In this regard I will pay attention to each *matn* and *isnād* of the reports that I cite. I will anticipate every possibility that I can imagine, without fully committing either to the ideas of those who take for granted the reliability of early Muslim sources or of those who reject the values that these sources may contain. Indeed, due to the careful analysis of *matn* (content) and *sanad* (transmission), we are able to trace all accounts of Musaylima, including which part of the story deserves to be dated earlier and which part is suspected to have originated later. As such, it is plausible to describe the way in which early Muslim literature has told the stories of Musaylima, leading us to reconstruct the history of Musaylima itself. Thus, it is possible to discover the skeleton of the fossilized Musaylima.

to Compilation, A Comparative Study with Old and New Testaments (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003).

14 See Jeremy Johns, "Archeology and the History of Early Islam: the First Seventy Years" *JESHO* 46 (2003).

15 To name just a few of them, N. Abbott, F. Rahman, F. Sezgin, M. M. Azami, G. Schoeler, H. Motzki, F. Donner, and U. Rubin. The view of these scholars will be discussed at the appropriate place in this study.

16 This effort has recently been attempted by Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überliefrerung über das Leben Muḥammads* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); Harald Motzki, "The murder of Ibn Abī Ḥuqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some Maghāzī-reports" in *The Biography of Muḥammad, The Issue of the Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Amin Kamaruddin, "The Reliability of Ḥadīth-Transmission: A Re-examination of Ḥadīth-Critical Methods," *Ph.D Dissertation*, Bonn University, 2005; Andreas Görke, "The Historical Tradition about Hudaybiya, a Study of ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr's Account" in *The Biography of Muḥammad*.

17 See also Sebastian Günther, "Assessing the Sources of Classical Arabic Compilations: The Issue of Categories and Methodologies" *BJMES* 32 (2005): 80.

Nevertheless, two different methodological attitudes to the sources will inevitably affect our assumption concerning the existence of Musaylima. On the one hand, anyone who rejects all reports that Muslim narrators told and claims that they are mere mythical inventions in effects reject Musaylima's existence, making him a mythical figure invented by Muslim narrators. By contrast, anyone who takes for granted that all stories of Musaylima are reliable will be working below a scholarly standard, even by the measurement of traditional *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*. Having subscribed to an open-minded view, I will regard each report as a unique one with its own special text and context, so much so that I avoid applying generalizations of certain theories to all reports. Not only will I apply the standard "*was es eigentlich gewesen war*" at the level of Musaylima, but I will also do so at the level of the transmitters delivering their reports.

In my study I will make use of many of the theories held by scholars not directly concerned with the field of Islamic studies, such as Derrida,[18] Foucault,[19] Habermas,[20] Barthes,[21] and Greenblatt.[22] This means that I am always prepared to broaden the perspective that I will employ in understanding certain texts and contexts. I will also anticipate as many possibilities as I can imagine while reading certain texts. This approach in the field of Islamic Studies is not at all new, as many—e.g., Susanne Enderwitz,[23] Navid Kermani[24] and Matthias Vogt[25]—have already set the examples prior to this study. The following section is devoted to the consequences of employing a certain approach in seeing early Islam.

[18] On deconstructing certain texts while reading them and by anticipating any contexts involved.

[19] On anticipating the power-relation that exists within certain texts.

[20] On the theory of communicative action.

[21] On the theory about the 'death of the author.

[22] On his sharp critical insights into Shakespeare's works.

[23] See her "From Curriculum Vitae to Self-narration: Fiction in Arabic Autobiography" in Stefan Leder, ed., *Story-Telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrasovitz, 1998). In this regard, Enderwitz employs postmodern literary criticism in approaching Arabic autobiography. See also her *Unsere Situation schuf unsere Erinnerungen: Palästinensische Autobiographien zwischen 1967-2000* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002) 23-32.

[24] In his Gott ist Schön, *Das ästhetische Erleben des Koran* (Münschen: C. H. Beck, 1999), Kermani offers later theories of aesthetics in understanding the poetic style that the Qurʾān employs.

[25] *Figures de califes entre histoire et fiction, al-Walid b. Yazid et al-Amin dans la représentation de l'historiographie arabe de l'époque abbaside* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2006). Vogt examines the image of al-Walid and al-Amin as portrayed by Muslim literature. Vogt finds that there is an interplay between reality and fantasy in the way in which Muslim narrators tell the stories about the caliphs. In doing so, Vogt employs current literary theories developed by R. Barthes, W. Iser, P. Ricoeur and many others.

Understanding *Nubuwwa*: The Consequences of Approaches

In viewing the history of early Islam, adopting a certain approach has consequences. Take the early concept of *nubuwwa* (prophethood)—which certainly plays a vital role in dealing with our theme Musaylima—as an example. In this regard, a few key words can perhaps be presented, that may help us explain the concept of prophethood in a somewhat novel way:

kāhin(soothsayer)[26]	*saj*ʿ (rhymed prose)
sāḥir (magician)[27]	*siḥr* (magic)
shāʿir (poet)[28]	*shiʿr* (poetry)
nabī (prophet)[29]	*nubuwwa* (prophethood)
rasūl (messenger)[30]	*risāla* (mesengerhood)

One may venture to say that in dealing with the theme of Islamic prophethood, one cannot deny the importance of these ten key words. The way in

[26] See, for example, T. Fahd "Kāhin and Kihāna" in *EI²*; Devin J. Stewart, "Soothsayer" in *EQ*; Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse: History and Theory of ʿArūḍ* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 106 and elsewhere.

[27] See, for example, Gabriel Mandel Khan, "Magic" in *EQ*. This keyword plays a considerable role with regard to the theory of *Iʿjāz* in later Muslim literature; see chapter ten.

[28] See, for example, Alan Jones, "Poetry and Poets" in *EQ*. For a more specific discussion on the relation of the Qurʾānic verses and the phenomena of *kāhin*, *shāʿir* and *sāḥir*, see, for instance, Matthias Radscheit, *Die koranische Herausforderung: Die taḥaddī-Verse im Rahmen der Polemikpassagen des Korans* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996) 37.

In addition, Zwettler argues for a different understanding of *kāhin*, *shāʿir*, and *nabī* with regards to their role in the pre-Islamic society. See his "A Mantic Manifesto" in James L. Kugel, *Poetry and Prophecy, the Beginning of a Literary Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 77-80 and elsewhere. To illustrate, Zwettler maintains that *shāʿir* played a secular role, whereas *kāhin* played a religious one. *Nabī* and *rasūl*, on the other hand, are placed somewhere else, as both proclaimed prophethood and revelation received from God.

Frolov, however, observes the continuation, if not the evolution, of the genres of *saj*ʿ, *rajaz* and *shiʿr*. See his *Classical Arabic Verse* 98 and elsewhere.

I would argue, however, that it is hard sometimes to present a clear-cut division of *kāhin*, *sāḥir*, *shāʿir*, *rasūl*, and *nabī* in terms of their mixed roles in pre-Islamic society. Aswad and Sajāḥ, for instance, are obviously known as *kāhin* and *kāhina*—as well as tribal leaders—who claimed prophethood. Musaylima, in this vein, also attempted to assume his role to serve as both mouthpiece of his people and their leader. Thus, he claimed to be *kāhin*, *nabī*, *rasūl* and *shāʿir* all at once. Umayya b. Abī Salṭ (on whom see chapter eight) may serve here as another example, of someone who is perceived as a *shāʿir* and who also proclaimed prophethood. Nowhere is he experienced as a political leader, however. Nor is he a *sāḥir*. However, he is said to have shown miracle with regard to the surgery of his breast by two birds (see chapter eight). Of course, there were a number of professional *shāʿirs* in the pre-Islamic period, such as al-Aʿshā from the tribe Ḥanīfa, who neither claimed prophethood nor assumed tribal leadership. For the classification of pre-Islamic poets, see, for instance, Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse* 224, ref. cited.

[29] Although the word *nabī* stemmed from Arabic root, *nb*ʾ, many scholars have related it to other Semitic roots, such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or even Manichean tradition. See Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabularies of the Qurʾān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938) 276-277; T. Fahd, "Nubuwwa" in *EI²*.

[30] See, for instance, A. H. Mathias Zahniser, "Messenger" in *EQ*.

which we order them may influence the way in which we denote their meanings. In the following discussion I would like to present four possible orderings of these words together with the different implications these orderings have on the early concept of prophethood.

To present the first possible order:

Fig. 0.1

25 *nabīs* and *rasūls* *risāla/nubuwwa*	: Muḥammad
kāhin, sāḥir, shāʿir *sajʿ, siḥr, shiʿr*	: Musaylima

This order may represent a theological and doctrinal perspective that has matured along with the growth of Islamic theological orthodoxy since, the third or fourth centuries after the Hijra in Muslim scholarship. The arguments for this ordering can be found in particular in the *iʿjāz, dalāʾil*, and *nubuwwa* literature.

Looking at the above diagram, several *nabī*s and *rasūl*s located above the line are those whose names are 25 *rasūl*s and *nabī*s from Adam to Jesus and whom, according to Islamic doctrine, the prophethood of Muḥammad sealed. Furthermore, according to this point of view, each *nabī* or *rasūl* is always sent by God throughout the history of humankind. As a result, there is a certain tendency put different epochs of human history alongside each other by classifying each as either obedient to God's *nabīs* and *rasūls* or disobedient to them.[31]

The keywords located under the line in the above diagram—*kāhin, sāḥir*, and *shāʿir*—can therefore to be interpreted as misguided practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs, and the reason why the true Prophet was sent to guide them to the right path.

The above stance leads to the denial of any possible religious affinity between local practices of *kihāna* and prophethood and present them as entirely different in nature.[32] Thus, the following argument

[31] See, for instance, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *al-Waḥy al-muḥammadī, thubūt al-nubuwwa bi al-qurʾān wa daʿwat shuʿūb al-madaniyya ilā al-islām dīn al-ukhuwwa al-insāniyya wa al-salām* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Nahḍa, 1375/1956) 51.

[32] See, for instance, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Nubuwwāt wa mā yataʿallaq bihā*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Cairo: Maktaba al-Kulliyat al-Azhariyya, n.d.) 51. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib b. al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-bayān ʿan al-farq bayn al-muʿjizāt wa al-karāmāt wa al-ḥiyal wa al-kihāna wa al-siḥr wa al-nārinjāt*, ed. and English summary by Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Sharqiyya, 1958), see in particular p. 93, and for the English summary p. 24. See also, Muḥammad Ḥasan Hītū, *al-Muʿjiza al-qurʾāniyya, al-iʿjāz al-ʿilmī wa al-ghaybī* (Beirut: Muʿassasa al-Risāla, 1409/1989) 18. Interestingly, the story of al-Walīd b. Mughīra (see chapter eight) and ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa in the sīra literature is taken to serve as an example of the negation of any relation between *waḥy* (prophetic revelation) and *kihāna*. See, for instance,

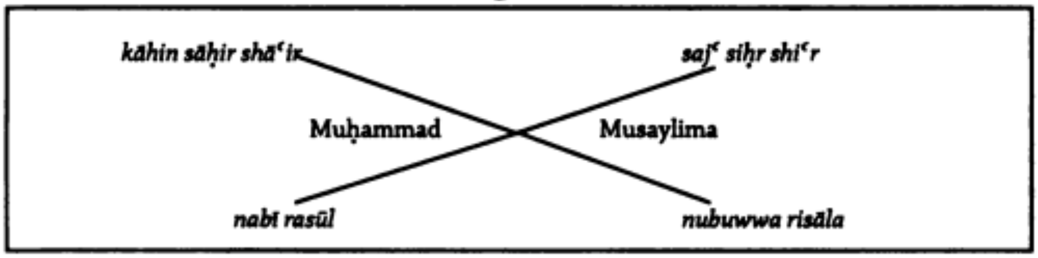
states more or less that prophethood did not stem from *kihāna* and has nothing to do with it. Neither does it fit into the *shāʿir* tradition.[33] Rather, the Prophethood of Muḥammad is perceived to have gone beyond the local milieu and even human history, due to the universality of the message. It therefore differs from the local religious beliefs and traditions of Arabs contemporary to the Prophet.

This view has certain consequences for Musaylima, whose prophethood, of course, is excluded from the list of true *rasūls* and *nabīs*, and yet whose declaration is placed in the misguided path of those known as *kāhin*, *sāḥir*, and *shāʿir*, of whom still practiced the local religious customs, uttered *sajʿ*, *shiʿr*, and produced *siḥr*.

Within a very different scholarly tradition, some Western works also adopt this point of view, emphasizing the shifting values between the pre-Islamic *jāhilī* period and the emergence of Islamic prophethood, and asserting that Islam entirely reformed the old values while introducing new values and concepts. This argument can perhaps best be seen in the works of Goldziher,[34] Micheal Zwettler,[35] Isutzu,[36] and Watt.[37]

The second possible order of our key words can be presented as follows:

Fig. 0.2



ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Abd al-Muʿṭī ʿArafa, *Qaḍiyyat al-iʿjāz al-qurʾānī wa atharuhā fī tadwīn al-balāgha al-ʿarabiyya* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1405/1985) 67-68.

33 Not only can this tendency be found in Islam, but this also existed in early Jewish traditions. See, for instance, Alan Cooper, "Imagining Prophecy" in James L. Kugel, *Poetry and Prophecy* 26-44. In the much earlier Greek tradition, the demarcation between secular singer and divine mantis is also maintained. See Gregory Nagy, "Ancient Greek Poetry, Prophecy, and Concpets of Theory" in *Poetry and Prophecy* 56-64.

34 Reference to Goldziher's view, see Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto" 106. See also ref. by Watt below.

35 M. Zwettler, "A Mantic Manifesto" in James L. Kugel, *Poetry and Prophecy* 106 and 107.

36 Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschaung* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964) 28. See also his, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qurʾān* (Montreal: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1966) 16, 29, 30, and elsewhere.

37 Watt, in this regard, contrasts the pre-Islamic tribal values of Arabs—i.e., *muruwwa* (manliness)–with Islamic values. Watt, however, pays less attention to *ḥanafiyya*. See Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* 16-29, see also excursus C. In the words of Watt, "it is generally accepted that the archaic pagan religion was comparatively uninfluential in Muḥammad's time" (p. 23).

This second order may represent the point of view of historians who pay special attention to the local milieu of Mecca, Medina and Yamāma, which are considered to be the locations where the two prophethoods emerged. The historical affinity among all these words is evident. The words at the top of the diagram—*kāhin, sāḥir,* and *shāʿir,* i.e. those who produced *sajʿ*, *siḥr*, and *shiʿr* are therefore perceived as belonging to local traditions, which, to some extent, had to do with the history of prophethood. *Kāhins* who delivered *sajʿ*—as a part of local cult practices—and *shāʿir* who uttered *shiʿr*—as a part of local oral tradition—can be regarded as constituting the milieu from which the concept of *nabī* and *rasūl* emerged.

In this regard, the prophethoods of Muḥammad and Musaylima are perceived to have occurred in the context of the sixth-seventh century Arabian peninsula, i. e., Ḥijāz and Yamāma. This view was first espoused by the Meccan poets, whose story is still well preserved in the early works of *sīra* literature, which tell us that they regarded Muḥammad as being not different from themselves.[38] We can also find certain parallels of this view in the modern study of Islam. The roles of *nabī* and *rasūl* in the traditional community are seen as an evolution of those of *kāhin, sāḥir,* and *shāʿir.*[39] As they are described in the Islamic literature as part of *jāhiliyya* tradition, the modern studies have called for re-examination of this tradition from which some Arab prophets emerged.

Early genres of Muslim literature, such as *sīra, tārīkh, ḥadīth*, and *tafsīr*, preserve some materials which may serve as windows into the local Arab traditions prior to Islam. Most Islamicists have so far relied on these sources to explain the history behind the birth of Islamic prophethood, among them Wellhausen, Hawting, Kister, and Rubin, to name just a few. Early Muslim historians also realized these historical roots of Islamic prophethood. Instead of rejecting them, they tried to explain them in their own way. Al-Masʿūdī, whose case will also be discussed below, is among the best examples of this.

This view will dramatically change the traditional Muslim image of Musaylima, who shared the same milieu with that of the Prophet Muḥammad, namely the Arabian peninsula of the sixth century. The difference is that Islam, brought by Muḥammad, has survived and has become a foundation of many great kingdoms and nations in history, whereas the cult of Musaylima

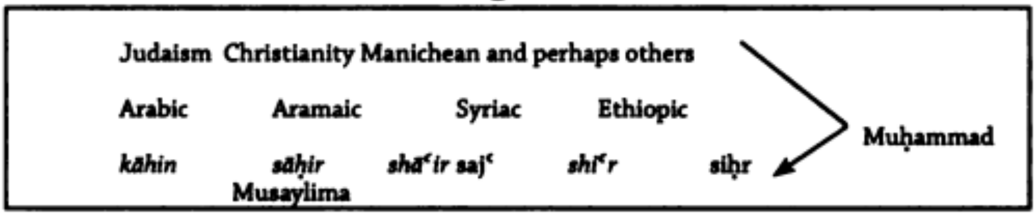
[38] For a detailed discussion of the Meccan poets' accusation that The Prophet Muhamad produced the same *shiʿr* as they did, see, for instance, Irfan Shahid, "Another Contribution to Koranic Exegesis: The Sura of the Poets (XXVI)" in *JAL* 14 (1983): 10, 16, -21.

[39] Interestingly, studies on the Biblical prophets began the analogy between the role of prophet and that of poet over a century ago. See, for instance, Edward B. Pollard, "The Prophet as a Poet" *BW* 12 (1898) 328: "In several respects are poet and prophet one. Each is concerned with truth. The poet is not one who deals in fancies merely. Real poetry is the expression of that which is deepest and truest in life. He deals with the sublimely real. Imagination is not fancy, but is twin to faith." See also the same analogy employed by Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam, Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957) 62.

perished. Yamāma, moreover, became a political part of the caliphal regions of Medina, Damascus, and Baghdad respectively (see chapter six below).

To move to the third possible ordering our key words:

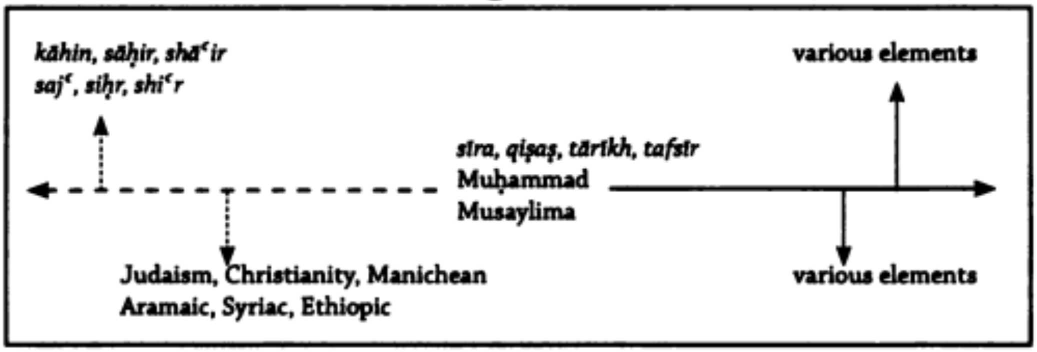
Fig. 0.3



Like the second diagram, this third one suggests that it is not necessary to divorce the emergence of prophethood from its historical aspects. The difference is that one is tempted to relate the Arab prophethood to the preconditional contacts between the local traditions with those of the neighbourhoods. The prophethood, according to this view, emerged from this plural and complex environment. A considerable number of Western scholars have devoted their study in this direction, including Richard Bell, Abraham I. Katsh, Moshe Gil, Arthur Jeffery, and Günther Lüling. However, due to the very limited sources at our disposal, we cannot say anything more than inferential with regards to the prophethood of Musaylima. Which foreign influences contributed to his claim and mission are merely speculation. Watt, for instance, observes that Christianity might have influenced Musaylima. This assumption is based on the fact that the neighboring tribes of Ḥanīfa—such as Taghlib and Bakr—were Christian and one of Musaylima's stanzas contains elements of Christianity (see chapter nine below).

Let us now turn to the fourth possible ordering:

Fig. 0. 4



The above diagram results from the skeptical attitude towards the Muslim sources by scholars such as J. Wansbrough and P. Crone. The point of entry into the concept of prophethood, according to this approach, is not at the time of Muḥammad. Instead, this approach emphasizes a critical stance toward the reliability of the sources written one or two centuries after the death of Muḥammad. The concept of his prophethood, according to this per-

spective, was mostly developed as early as the second century after the death of the Prophet. One should therefore ask whether the concept of prophethood reflects the historical past (marked with a dotted line in the above diagram) or rather the position of scholars of the second century after Hijra or beyond (marked with a straight line). To put it differently, the formation of the doctrine of prophethood was not accomplished during the lifetime of the Prophet, but was rather defined or redefined by later literature such as *ḥadīth, sīra, qiṣaṣ, tārīkh*, and *tafsīr* works. The concept of prophethood then underwent further evolution under the influence of various foreign elements and along with the growth of Muslim literature.

This skeptical approach, however, is not always desirable in reading the story of Musaylima, for the following reasons: If one doubts all of what Muslim literature tells us about Musaylima, one has to seek alternative sources. This would yield us little in terms of concrete results. The Muslim sources must be treated as the only contemporary witness to Musaylima, unless manuscripts written by Musaylima's followers are one day found. In addition, if one rejects the accounts of Musaylima provided by Muslim writers, but fails to find alternative sources, one could conclude that Musaylima was a mere mythical or fictional figure, and that he was not a historical person at all. This figure, according to this point of view, was merely invented by the second century of Muslim literature and beyond. However, if one rejects the historical Musaylima, one must also reject the rest of the Arab figures contained in the sources originating from the same period. Nothing remains and all of these stories about them become mere fiction.

There is, however, a certain lesson to be taken from the skeptical approach in reading the story of Musaylima. If one can critically consider the production of early figures such as the Prophet Muḥammad, as removed from the process of myth-making, then this can also be used to interpret the story of Musaylima. Certain parts of his story were reinvented at a later time and contain some changes. As we have seen elsewhere in this study, the story of Musaylima sometimes grew, shrunk, diminished or was totally denied. Consequently, it is difficult to deny the existence of Musaylima, if we admit that of his contemporary, Muḥammad. Neither can we deny some development and mythologization of the stories.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy

However, in later Muslim literature, where Islamic orthodoxy prevails, the connection between *kihāna* and *nubuwwa* have been ignored. Accordingly, in Muslim source, Islamic prophethood is divorced from its original milieu, whereas critical stance in acknowledging the affinity between the two important concepts is silenced. The following section, however, traces the roots of the two terms *nubuwwa* and *kihāna*.

To begin with, the root *khn*, according to Ibn Manẓūr, is linguistically related to *khbr*. Furthermore, *khbr*, in this context, means 'news', which is usually related to certain facts. In effect, two activities—predicting future events and revealing secrets (*asrār*)—are associated with this. Simply put, these sayings were oracles, which were often delivered by *kuhhān* (sing. *kāhin*/soothsayer). In doing so, they also composed *saj*ʿ (rhymed prose). Ibn Manẓūr also informs us that from pre-Islamic time to the period of early Islam, two Jewish tribes—Qurayza and Nāḍir—were known for their *kuhhān*. The label of *kāhin*, however, also designated other professions. The Arabs called those who mastered certain skills or certain types of knowledge *kāhin*, i.e. doctors (*ṭabībs*) and *munajjims* (astrologists) were also called *kāhin*.[40]

In view of the explanation of Ibn Manẓūr, the word *kāhin* seems to have narrowed from a broader designation. One of the meanings, soothsaying, is still perserved in the early *ḥadīth* literature, wherein such soothsaying is prohibited. The main reason for this is to stress the disconnection between *kihāna* and *nubuwwa*. The Prophet is reported to have said: "*iyyākum wa saj*ʿ *wa al-kuhhān*" (Beware of rhymed prose and soothsaying).[41] By inferring from this, it becomes clear that both activities are connected; a *kāhin* produces *saj*ʿ, and both the person and his product seem to have been banned at the same time. In another tradition, the Prophet even prohibits using certain forms of *saj*ʿ while praying (*du*ʿ*ā*ʾ).[42]

In addition, references to soothsayers who uttered rhymed prose (*saj*ʿ)[43] can still be found in the Qurʾān and in the later exegetical literature. However, the description provided by both sources stresses that the Scripture is neither any sort of *saj*ʿ nor any sort of *shi*ʿ*r*. This denial is unsurprising though, as the Prophet Muḥammad himself is said to have faced the accusation of being a *kāhin*, or even *majnūn* (possessed by *jinn*).[44] Not only does the Qurʾān speak of the Prophet Muḥammad's situation, it also tells us that the same accusation had been made against previous prophets, such as Moses and Jesus (see chap-

40 Ibn Manẓūr, "*kahana*" in *Lisān*.

41 Ibn Manẓūr, "*kahana*" in *Lisān*. Numerous traditions contain prohibition to visit and to believe in *kāhin*; see al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. ṭibb*, 46/vol. 3, 1191-1192; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Masāqa* 9/vol. 2, 669; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. ṭibb* 21/vol. 2, 657; al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. buyū*ʾ 91/vol. 2, 757; Ibn Maja, *Sunan* (Liechtenstein, Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Tijāra* 9/314; al-Dārimī, *Sunan* (Dimashq: Bāb al-Barīd, 1349) *k. buyū*ʾ 34/vol. 2, 255. A tradition also says that *kāhins* will not enter paradise; see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.) vol. 3, 14.

42 Ibn Manẓūr, "*sajaʿa*" in *Lisān*. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *k. Daʿawāt* 20/vol. 3, 1289; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vol. 6, 217, cf. Wensinck, *Concordance* vol. 2, 431.

43 See G.R. Hawting, "Pre-Islamic Arabia and the Qurʾān," in *EQ*, 255.

44 See, for instance, Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qurʾān: *I*ʿ*jāz* and Related Topics," in A. Rippin, ed., *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 139-140.

ter seven). In other words, earlier prophets had faced the same challenges from their own people that the Prophet Muḥammad encountered. The parallels between the prophethood of Muḥammad and those of earlier Biblical prophets is maintained by at least two remarkable points: the blatant attempt to disconnect the mission of the Prophet from the local *kihāna* and to assert that previous prophets were also accused of being *kuhhān* and *shuʿarāʾ*.

Why did the Meccans accuse the Prophet of being a *kāhin*? This question leads us to speculate about the accusers, who were both the audience of the Qurʾān and those whom the Prophet addressed in his sayings. It is obvious that the audiences were familiar with the concepts of *kāhin, sāḥir, shāʿir*, and *majnūn*. Thus, according to the contemporary customs and traditions they embraced, they perceived that those who uttered divine sayings and taught moral lessons were simply *kuhhān*. In short, this somehow describes their knowledge, if not their worldview,[45] and indicates that the knowledge and practices of *kihāna* were still prevalent among the Arabs. Whereas the Prophet is positioned as the speaker and the Meccans as the audience, one may then pose another question: Did the speaker and the audience hold certain common view? Or did the speaker completely reform the audience's worldview and offer something entirely news? If so, how far was the break and shift in terms of tradition and worldview between the speaker and the audience? Was the speaker's new re-formulation of the old worldview totally independent from that of the audience? I do not wish to burden the reader with my conjecture, so I will simply leave these questions unanswered.

Having consulted the lexicon of Ibn Manẓūr, let us now turn to the views of early Muslim historians, as the matter of prophethood is undoubtedly a part of history. They seem to have realized the puzzling and yet challenging connection among the following three elements: local Arab tradition, Biblical prophets, and Islamic prophethood. Explaining which aspects of these three elements should be connected to the prophethood of Muḥammad and which aspects should be disconnected from it seems to have become their central task. What is also clear is that most of the local elements, such as *kihāna*, should be disconnected from *nubuwwa*, whereas the Biblical prophets should be connected to it. What remains puzzling is how to establish the connection between the Biblical prophets and the Prophet, if the local setting is denied. It is also hard to imagine the gap between them in terms of time and place; the Biblical prophets lived in the distant past and most of them did not live in the Ḥijāzi region. The local Arab prophets serve here as a historical bridge con-

[45] According to T. Fahd, however, the role of *kāhin* at the time of The Prophet had already declined. It is therefore scornful enough to have been accused as a *kāhin*. See Fahd, "Dinivation" in *EQ*. However, one may object to this suggestion, by arguing that the accusation of being a *kāhin* and *shāʿir* was not necessarily intended to be contemptuous. Rather, it simply represents the worldview of the accusers, and perhaps of the accused one. The contemptuous implication seems to have resulted from later development of Muslim literature, after the image of *kāhin* having been blackened.

necting the Prophet and Biblical prophets; this is the position that the early Muslim historians have taken. To be clear, in the midst of the local *kihāna*, there were some Arabs who, according to early Muslim historians, still held God's religion and who were placed in the *fatra* period.[46]

Ch. Pellat is right in noting that although Ibn Qutayba presents a heading entitled: "the men who had religion before the mission of the Prophet," he makes no explicit mention of *fatra*.[47] It is al-Masʿūdī in his *Murūj* who presents a special heading entitled: "Mention of those who lived in the period between Jesus and Muḥammad."[48] Moreover, his discussion covers several figures, who deserve our serious attention at least in three respects. First, they are said to have embraced the true religion. Furthermore, some lived immediately prior to the emergence of Islam. Finally, others are also reported to have witnessed the true prophethood of Muḥammad. By presenting these figures, al-Masʿūdī performed the task of building a historical bridge between the Biblical prophets and the Prophet. It is therefore useful to present the following figures:

1. Khālid b. Sīnān al-ʿAbbāsī[49] is described in the early Muslim literature as being among those who held the "true religion," and who is sometimes described as a prophet. His daughter, according to a report, visited the Prophet Muḥammad while reading Q. 112 (on the oneness of God), a reading that, according to her, her father used to recite.
2. Riʿāb b. Shannā,[50] a former Christian, once heard a voice from the sky, saying that "the best people in earth are three: Rāʿib b. Shannā, monk Baḥīra, and a man who will come (the third person mentioned was Muḥammad)."
3. Asʿad Abū Karb al-Ḥamīrī,[51] who converted to Islam, also practiced "the true religion."

[46] See Ch. Pellat, "Fatra," in *EI*².

[47] Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwat ʿUkāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1960) 58.

[48] *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādan al-jawhar*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Din ʿAbd al-Ḥāmid ([Cairo]: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyayh al-Kubrā, 1377/1958) vol. 1, 65-75.

[49] See also Ch. Pellat, "Khālid b. Asʿad," in *EI*²; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 62. See also Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm al-Malāyīn, 1970) vol. 6, 84; Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1408/1988) vol. 4, 476. It should be noted the differences between *kihāna*, *nubuwwa*, *ḥanīfa*, and *fatra*. *Kihāna* refers to many local Arab practices, which, according to Ibn Khaldun, were a form of proto-*nubuwwa*. *Nubuwwa* is meant to be prophethood, claimed by those who admit to have received revelation from God. *Ḥanīfa* designates to a certain practice of ascetism, which, according to Tor Andrae, originally refers to non-Judeo-Christian tradition. *Fatra*, a term introduced by later Muslim historians, means a period between The Prophethood of ʿĪsā and Muḥammad.

[50] See also Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 58.

[51] Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 60.

4. Quṣṣ b. Sāʿida al-ʿIyyādī[52] was among the Arabs upon whom God bestowed wisdom. The Prophet, in confirming this, once said, "God poured His mercy to Quṣṣ."[53]
5. Zayd b. ʿAmr b. Nufayl,[54] a cousin of ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb, is also reported to have been an adherent of the *ḥanīf* religious tradition prior to the Prophet. Due to his piety, Zayd is reported to have avoided some pagan practices, entering the Kaʿba secretly at nights in order to distance himself from the idols which surrounded it. Some reports also tell us that he refused to eat the meat of animals slaughtered in the name of idols. According to these sources, he moved to al-Shām and stayed there until his death. Zayd's *ḥanīf* tendency seemed to resemble those of Abū ʿĀmir, ʿUmayya b. Abī Salṭ", and Abū Qays Shirma b. Abī Anas from the tribe Najjār of Anṣār whom we will discuss below.
6. As for Abū Qays,[55] he practiced in the same way as ʿUmayya b. Abī Salṭ and Abū ʿĀmir b. Sayf did, wearing a hair mantle like a monk, avoiding any practices of paganism, and building a mosque—an indication that he was also an adherent of the religion of Abraham. Abū Qays Shirma, however, is distinguished from other ḥanīf figures, in that he eventually converted to Islam.

The following figures are also reported to have directly witnessed the prophethood of Muḥammad. Waraqa b. Nawfal[56]—a cousin of Khadīja, the first wife of the Prophet—and ʿAdās—a freed man of ʿUtba b. Rabīʿah—are reported to have foretold the prophethood of Muḥammad. Similarly, a monk named Baḥīra[57] is also reported to have read the sign of the seal of prophethood located between the two shoulders of Muḥammad prior to the prophethood.

More interestingly, ʿAbdalla b. Jahsh al-Asadī—whose former wife, Umm Ḥabība bt. Abī Sufyān b. Ḥarb, later married the Prophet—is also said to have

[52] See also Ch. Pellat, "Kuss b. Sāʿida al-ʿIyādi," in *EI²*; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 61; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 2, 229-238; A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammeds nach Bischer Grösstentheils Unbenutzeten Quellen* (Berlin: Nocolai'ische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861) vol. 1, 102-107.

[53] See also Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. ʿAlī Abū Mulḥim (Beirut: Dār Maktaba al-Hilāl, 1407/1988) vol. 1, 253.

[54] A. Sprenger, *Das Leben* vol. 1, 119-124; Kister, "A Bag of Meat: A Study of an Early *Ḥadīth*," *BSOAS* 33 (1970): 267-275; See also, Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 59; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 238-243; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) vol. *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya* 85-92.

[55] Frants Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, tr. Hans Heinrich Shaeder (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1955) 98; Sezgin *GAS* vol. 2, 294; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 61.

[56] See C.F. Robinson "Waraka b. Nawfal" in *EI²*; Kister, "Al-Taḥānut, an Inquiry into the Meaning of a Term," *BSOAS* 31 (1968), 224 n. 13. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 59; Sprenger, *Das Leben* vol. 1, 124.

[57] A. Abel, "Baḥīrah" in *EI²*; Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 229-238.

read certain "Scriptures," but apostatized from Islam and later converted to Christianity. Before his apostasy and conversion, ʿAbdalla is reported to have been among the Muslim immigrants to Abyssinia.[58]

The theme of *fatra* also appeals to Ibn Kathīr. However, before dealing with this theme, he presents the following figures under a somewhat different heading entitled "mention of those who were known in the period of *jāhiliyya*": Ḥātim al-Ṭaʾī,[59] ʿAbdalla b. Jaʿdān,[60] Imru al-Qays,[61] Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, Baḥīra, Quṣṣ b. Sāʾida, and Zayd b. ʿUmar. Given this fact, it is obvious that Ibn Kathīr places some figures, whom al-Masʿūdī had included in the *fatra*, in the *jāhiliyya* category. In reference to Ibn Kathīr's *fatra*, he presents a heading which reads: "among the events during the period of *fatra*," which covers the following: Kaʿb b. Luʾay, who used to collect his people on Friday (560 years before Muḥammad);[62] the rediscovery of the Zamzam well;[63] the sacrifice of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭ*alib*'s son, namely ʿAbdalla (the Prophet Muḥammad's father);[64] and the marriage of ʿAbdalla with Āmina (the Prophet's mother).[65]

In view of the new meaning of *fatra* provided by Ibn Kathīr, one may fail, however, to find a historical bridge connecting the local *kihāna* practice and the prophethood of Muḥammad. Ibn Kathīr turned the *fatra* period of al-Masʿūdī to that of *Jāhiliyya*. Specifically, Ibn Kathīr denied Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, Baḥīra, Quṣṣ b. Sāʾida, and Zayd b. ʿUmar among the *fatra* figures, instead of placing them among the *Jāhiliyya* ones. Thus, it is not hard to see the tendency in Ibn Kathīr to distance the prophethood of Muḥammad from the historical setting and local milieu.

Nevertheless, the concept of *fatra*, particularly with regards to that held by al-Masʿūdī, functions in the following way. Some attempts at distancing the prophethood of Muḥammad from the local *kihāna* are shown. However, the connection between these and the Biblical prophets is maintained. In order to connect them, the figures of certain native Arab prophets were raised. This suggests that *kihāna* has nothing to do with the prophethood of Muḥammad, which was shared by earlier local Arab prophets, whose mission was disconnected from the practices of *kihāna*, but connected to those of the

58 *Murūj* vol. 1, 65-75. Watt, however, informs us that it was ʿUbayd Allāh b. Jaḥsh, ʿAbdalla's brother, who turned to Christianity. ʿAbdalla himself is said to have returned to Mecca and remained Muslim and finally died at the campaign of Uḥud. See Watt, "ʿAbd Allah b. Djahsh," in *EI*². Ref. cited.

59 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 212-217.

60 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 217-218.

61 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 218-220.

62 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 244.

63 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 244-248. See also a long discussion on the matter by G. R. Hawting in his "The Disappearance and Rediscovery of Zamzam and the 'Well of the Kaʿba'," *BSOAS* 43 (1980): 44-54.

64 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 248-249.

65 *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 249-251.

Biblical prophets. In this regard, not only does the connection between the three sound more historical, al-Masʿūdī seems also to broaden the scope of prophethood, as not only applying to the Israelites but also to the Arabs.

What we have dealt with is the task of the Muslim historians. In a much later time and during the golden age of intellectualism, Muslim philosophers shed new light on this matter by universalizing the concept of prophethood. For example, the Muslim philosophers—al-Farabī and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)—boldly connected the concept of Islamic prophethood to the ancient elements of Greek theories, blended with Stoicism, neo-Platonism, and the eclectic Hellenism of the early centuries of the Christian era.[66] As a result of this, the discussion of prophethood goes beyond doctrinal Islam and Arabic traditions. It can perhaps be seen in the use of intellect (*ʿaql*) which served as a technical term that enabled the philosophers to explain the nature of divine revelation received by the prophets. Both al-Farabī[67] and Ibn Sīnā,[68] for instance, developed and exercised this concept of intellect which alone connects the human and divine Reality. Crudely put, there are two kinds of intellect: that of common humans and active intelligence. The prophets are granted a certain privileged capacity to acquire active intelligence, which enables them to communicate with the divine Reality and to receive revelations from God.[69]

Whereas Muslim historians claim that prophethood also belongs to Arabs and is not an exclusive right of the Israelites, Muslim philosophers question the exclusivity of prophethood to the Islamic tradition, if not also to the Semitic tradition as a whole. The basis for this explanation of the prophethood lies in the role of the intellect, and this intellectual capacity has evidently been attained not only by the prophets but also by the philosophers. The Muslim thinkers shed new light on this matter by comparing sacred revelation and philosophical contemplation. As a result, Muḥammad is perceived as being both prophet and philosopher. This has one serious consequence, however, as Fazlur Rahman points out:

> And if Muḥammad was a true philosopher, in promulgating his religion and law he must have but talked only in successful parables down to people. Conversely, since the Greek personalities in question and others were undoubtedly great philosophers and they did not, indeed, keep their philosophy to themselves, but formulated actual theories of state and law on its basis, surely, they were divinely inspired prophets?[70]

The spirit of this creative free thinking in Islamic scholarship, however, was later banished by more orthodox modes of thought. In this regard, Fazlur

[66] See Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* 10.

[67] See the diagram presented by Rahman in his *Prophecy in Islam* 14.

[68] See the diagram presented by Rahman in his *Prophecy in Islam* 20.

[69] See Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* 30-31.

[70] Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* 59.

Rahman presents some major Muslim writers who wrote againt such philosophers, including Ibn Ḥazm with his literal (*ẓāhirī*) approach, al-Ghazālī with his refutations of his predecessors,[71] and Ibn Taymiyya, who is the most radical of the three.[72] At the same time, this has served as a major obstacle, particularly for Muslims, in dealing with the matter of prophethood from historical and philosophical points of view; for the matter can now only be understood through doctrine in simplistic black and white terms. Ibn Taymiyya's concept of *ʿibāda* (service to God) and *tawḥīd* (oneness of God), for instance, have dominated the thoughts of many modern puritan Muslim thinkers. The purpose of human beings, according to this doctrine, is merely to serve and worship the one God, and not to engage in philosophical contemplation.[73] As far as the stance of this Islamic orthodoxy is concerned, no comparison can plausibly be made between prophethood and soothsaying, between the works of miracle and magic, between revelation and contemplation, and between Qurʾānic verses and poetry. As a result, previous attempts made by the earlier and more open-minded Muslim historians and philosophers have been silenced.

It is interesting to consider the stance of Ibn Khaldūn, who sheds new light on this matter by combining the philosophical and historical approaches. With regard to the former, he employs the role of intelligence to explain the ways in which the prophets and the soothsayers gained their heavenly knowledge from the divine world. Both, according to Ibn Khaldūn, gained their knowledge through the use of this special intelligence, which most ordinary humans are not able to achieve. The difference is that the soothsayers do not posses the ability to determine whether this heavenly information came from an evil or a virtuous spirit, and they are not able to achieve the high rank of prophethood. The prophets, on the other hand, have achieved the highest level of knowledge, in which they are prevented from any error (*iṣmah*). Ibn Khaldūn's historical awareness lies in relating soothsaying and prophethood to the stages of human epistemology in history. In fact, soothsaying is considered among the ranks of human efforts at seeking the truth (*min khawāṣ nafs al-insāniyya*). What is misleading in the cases of Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, Musaylima, Ṭulayḥa and Aswad—according to Ibn Khaldūn—is that they were clearly mere soothsayers, who sought to rise to the level of

[71] See also W. Montgomery Watt, "al-Gazali" in *EI²*, s.v.; Brockelmann, *GAL* vol. 1, 532-546, S. 1, 744-756; Sezgin, *GAS* vol. 1, 44, 493, 602, 638; vol. 2, 280, vol. 4, 43. See al-Ghazali's refutation of certain Muslim philosophers in his *al-Munqidh min al-ṣalāl*, trans. W. Watt as *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000); *Taḥāfut al-falāsifa*, trans. Sabih Ahmad Kamali as *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963).

[72] See H. Loust, "Ibn Taymiyya" in *EI²*; Brockelmann, *GAL* vol. 2, 125-127, S. 2, 119-26; Sezgin, *GAS* vol. 1, 519, vol. 2, 8, 162.

[73] Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* 101 and 102.

prophethood.[74] It is hardly an exaggeration to conclude that Ibn Khaldūn, in this regard, embraces a certain evolutionism, viewing the *kihāna* as a crude aspect of the more developed *nubuwwa* in man's search for true knowledge.

Equally interesting is the critical attitude of Rashīd Riḍā, a disciple of Muḥammad ʿAbduh, to both early orientalists and early Muslim sources regarding the pre-Islamic figures whom they relate to the prophethood of Muḥammad. These figures are present in *sīra* literature to lend weight to the idea that monotheism existed in the the pre-Islamic Arabs. What Riḍā refutes are the suggestions of some early orientalists, who subscribed to the view that Muḥammad had religious affinity to these figures, serving as their disciple. This leads to the conclusion that Christianity and Judaism directly influenced the prophethood of Muḥammad, for example by suggesting that the Prophet had been a mere disciple of Baḥīra. In fact, when Muḥammad, argues Riḍā, met Baḥīra during his travel to al-Shām, the former was only nine or twelve years-old.[75] In addition, Baḥīra, according to Riḍā, was neither Jewish nor Christian and embraced monotheism. By the same token, Waraqa b. Nawfal had no direct relation to the Prophet. It was Khadīja who consulted Waraqa—who, at that time, was old and blind, and died not long afterwards—with regard to the first revelation that the Prophet received.[76] Quṣṣ b. Sāʾida, similarly, had died before the Prophet served as a messenger. The direct contact of the Prophet to both figures drawn from the early Muslim *ḥadīths* is questionable, since these sources, according to Riḍā, are unsound, or at least are indicating *qāṭiʿ* (defects in transmission).[77]

Jawād ʿAlī, however, subscribes to an open-minded position in explaining the relation of *kihāna* and *nubuwwa*, particularly with respect to his historical awareness. ʿAlī has a particular chapter which reads "*al-anbiyāʾ al-jāhiliyyūn* (the pre-Islamic prophets)." The pre-Islamic prophets, according to ʿAlī, are as follows: (1) Hūd for the people of ʿĀd; (2) Ṣāliḥ for the Thamūd; (3) Khālid for the people of Qāṭiʿa b. ʿAbbās; (4) Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān for the people of Rass; (5) Shuʿayb b. dhī Mahḍam for the people of Ḥaḍur. Surprisingly, Jawād ʿAlī includes (6) Musaylima among those who claimed prophethood and who is even described to have done so in Mecca before the Hijra.[78] Thus, ʿAlī still inherits the position of classical Muslim historians in presenting the prophethood of Muḥammad historically and in acknowledging a certain affinity to the Arab local tradition.

The spirit of Ibn Taymiyya's Puritanism, on the other hand, has also been inherited, if not sharpened, by some later Muslim thinkers. Let us take ʿIzza

[74] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958) vol. 1, 202-207.

[75] Riḍā, *al-Waḥy al-Muḥammadī* 83.

[76] Riḍā, *al-Waḥy al-Muḥammadī* 84.

[77] Riḍā, *al-Waḥy al-Muḥammadī* 85.

[78] *Mufaṣṣal* vol. 6, 84.

Darwaza as an illustration. His position is much more radical than that of Ibn Kathīr in distancing the local historical elements from the emergence of Muḥammad's prophethood. In doing so, Darwaza seeks a literal answer from the Qurʾān alone. This can be seen in his treatment of the word *ḥanīf*, which, according to Darwaza, is treated here more or less in the same manner as the word *fatra*, in that both serve to connect the prophethood of Muḥammad to those of the previous prophets. Darwaza, by using his approach of cross referencing Qurʾānic verses—such as in Q. 2: 135; 3: 67-68; 6: 161; 22: 30-31; 30: 30-31—, perceives the *ḥanīf* followers to be no different from *ṣābiʾūn* in that both are described by the Qurʾān as adherents of the true religion of Abraham. Furthermore, they preserved the belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*). As such, Darwaza oversimplifies the historical facts, in order to apply his principle of puritanism in the story of *ḥanīf*. Unsurprisingly, he goes further by stating that the *ḥanīfs* were neither Christians nor Jews, who, according to him, had deviated from the true religion.[79] The religion of Abraham, Darwaza argues further, is not contaminated by any elements of polytheism or paganism. Moreover, Darwaza also rejects any connection between the term *ḥanīf* as a religious tradition and the name of the tribe Ḥanīfa, to which Musaylima belonged.[80]

As such, Darwaza stresses the purity of Islam and the Muslim identity which, according to him, differs from that of Jews and Christians. Of course, this claim has little historical basis, but rather an ideological one blended with a theological claim. What is also clear is that he distances his interpretation of Islamic history from extra-Islamic elements that may contaminate the 'true Islam'. Yet it leads Darwaza to deny the historical roots of Islam, if not the history of mankind. In this regard, one may question Darwaza: Where does he locate Islam in the longer history of mankind? Is the history of Islam not also a part of the history of humanity? Since only source is 'the Qurʾān,' one wonders: how can he tell about the history of mankind prior to the revelation of the Qurʾān, if the Scripture makes no explicit mention?

In short, seen from the perspective of Islamic orthodoxy, i.e. advocated by Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Kathīr, and Darwaza, the prophethood of Musaylima should be entirely rejected. Musaylima is seen as no more than a traditional Arab *kāhin*, who stood as an opponent to Prophet Muhammad. However, taking lessons from the perspectives of al-Masʿūdī, Ibn Qutayba, al-Farabī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Khaldūn, and Jawād ʿAlī, the figure of Musaylima and his prophethood can be better appreciated. In this vein, the concept of prophethood is broadened; the relationship between *kihāna* and *nubuwwa* is acknowledged; and the extent to which the claim of prophethood made by Musaylima

[79] Muḥammad ʿIzzat Darwaza, *ʿAṣr al-nabī wa bayʿatuh qabl -l-biʿtha, ṣuwar muqtabasa min-l-qurʾān al-karīm wa dirāsa taḥlīlat qurʾāniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Yaqaẓa al-ʿArabiyya, 1384/1964) 700, 701, 705.

[80] Darwaza, *ʿAṣr al-nabī* 705.

and his *kihāna* activities related to the birth of Islamic prophethood can be better explained. However, those who, e.g. Crone, Wansbrough, Nevo, and Karen, deem early Islamic sources as unreliable will deny Musaylima's very existence. The figure of Musaylima is only mythical.

Structure

This study is divided into eleven chapters as follows.

The first chapter focuses on the letter sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. I pay a great deal of attention to various versions of the text (*matn*) and the chain of transmission (*isnād*).

The second chapter presents fifteen *ḥadīth* reports which tell us about the story of the 'emissary,' to whom Musaylima entrusted his letter to Muḥammad. This 'emissary' was later executed under the order of ʿAbdalla b. Mas'ūd during the time of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, the third caliph, due to this courier's role in leading the people of Ḥanīfa to practice Musaylima's cult.

In the third chapter I re-read the letter of Musaylima, by placing the text in its context, in which the text was produced. The implication of each word in the letter with its historical role is anticipated. I also keep in mind the role of Ibn Isḥāq who put the letter in the *Sīra* and who was under the patronage of the second Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr.

The fourth chapter presents Muḥammad's answer to Musaylima. I discuss the contents of the answer and argue that the response of Muḥammad to Musaylima reflects the attitude adopted by later caliphs in rejecting any claimants to prophethood after Muḥammad. The *al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidūn*, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids caliphs served as guardians of the *khātam* doctrine (the seal of prophethood), according to which no claimant after Muḥammad is allowed.

The fifth chapter presents the reports that relate the encounter between the two prophets, Muḥammad and Musaylima. Comparison between various versions of these reports are made.

The sixth chapter is devoted to various attempts by Muslim scholars to unearth the enigmatic identity of Musaylima to address the accounts of his pedigree, life, claim to prophethood, and role in the politics of Yamāma.

The seventh chapter traces some figures in Yamāma, including Musaylima's predecessors (Hawdha and al-Aʿshā), companions (*al-Rajjāl* and *Muḥkam*), and opponents (those who stood on the side of Khālid b. al-Walīd upon his arrival with his troops in Yamāma).

The eighth chapter problematizes negative labels attributed to Musaylima, e.g. the arch-liar (*al-kadhdhāb*) that can be found in both earlier and later Muslim literature. Here, I compare some accusations made against Musaylima with those made against many opponents of Muḥammad, some of whom also claimed to be prophets.

The ninth chapter analyzes thirty-three stanzas attributed to Musaylima preserved in various genres of Muslim literature. Comparisons are made between the style, pattern, and diction of these stanzas and those of selected Meccan verses of the Qur'ān. Some teachings of Musaylima's cult are drawn from these fragments of his qur'ān.

The tenth chapter addresses the implications of similarities between Musaylima's stanzas and the Meccan verses of the Qur'ān. I presents the way in which Muslim scholars have used Musaylima's stanzas to support the arguments of the inimitability the Qur'ān (*i'jāz* doctrine). I also discuss the possible use of these stanzas to shed new light on the accounts of early Islam.

The eleventh chapter is devoted to the final battle between Khālid b. al-Walīd and Musaylima Yamāma, which resulted in the defeat of Musaylima. This chapter also sheds new light on accounts behind the collection of the Qur'ān under the reign of Abū Bakr. I argue that this effort to collect the Qur'ān served as a monument for the Muslims' victory over Musaylima's force and his 'qur'ān'.

I conclude this study by proposing that it is possible—with a certain degree of caution—to detect distortions in the representation of Musaylima by his enemies in Muslim literature. I demonstrate that we are able to unveil the masks that have covered this figure by reclaiming his prophethood, qur'ān, cult, mosque, and the stories of his followers.

Chapter One

A Letter from Yamāma

Il n'y a pas de hors-texte (Nothing is outside the text).
Derrida[1]

Towards the end of the year 10 H/631-632 AD, Musaylima, son of Ḥabīb from the tribe Ḥanīfa in Yamāma who claimed prophethood, sent a letter to the 'supposed sole' claimant of the office, Muḥammad, son of ʿAbdalla from the tribe Quraysh in Medina. This chapter is devoted to various texts of Musaylima's letter addressed to Muḥammad, whose transmissions ends with the authority of Ibn Isḥāq (b. 85/633/4 - d. 150/767).

The Message

Ibn Hishām (d. 218/834 or 213/828) and al-Ṭabarī (b. 224-5/839-d. 310/923), who assign the authority to Ibn Isḥāq, preserve the text of Musaylima's message, which reads:

> *Min musaylima rasūl allāh, ilā muḥammad rasūl allāh.*
> *Salām ʿalayk, ʿammā baʿd.*
> *Fa innī qad ushriktu fī-l-amr maʿak, wa inna lanā niṣf al-arḍ, wa li quraysh niṣf al-arḍ, walākin quraysh qawm yaʿtadūn.*
>
> From Musaylima the messenger of God to Muḥammad the messenger of God
> Peace be upon you, hereafter

[1] J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 158; Nicholas Royle, *Jacques Derrida* (London: Routledge, 2003) 162.

> Indeed, I have been made partner with you in authority. To us belongs half of the land and to Quraysh the other half, but Quraysh are people who transgress.[2]

Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), however, presents the phrase "*wa inna lanā niṣf al-arḍ* (to us belongs half of the earth)," which is followed not by the words "...to Quraysh the other half,"[3] but by a reference to the obstreperous nature of the Quraysh. Al-Maqrīzī[4] (766/1365- 845/1441 H) and Ibn al-Athīr (555/1160-630/1223)[5] present this same redaction. The former misses the greeting "*salām ʿalayk,*" whereas the latter uses the personal pronoun "*hā*" rather than repeating the word *arḍ* a second time. Al-Bayhaqī (5th H or even earlier, 3rd H), likewise has the same as those of the above two scholars, although he replaces the word '*ushriktu*' with '*shuriktu*.'[6] Al-Anṣārī (d. 783/1381) for his part adds "*ṣallā allāh ʿalayh wa sallam* (God blesses and gives peace upon him)" after *muḥammad rasūl allāh*.[7]

Al-Thaʿālibī (350/961-429/1038) includes more wording, but it is clearly based on Ibn Hishām's redaction. He reverses the heading of Musaylima's letter to read: "*ilā al-nabī muḥammad rasūl allah min musaylima rasūl allāh.*" The

[2] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 600; trans. A. Guillaume., *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 649 [modification mine]. Al-Ṭabarī also provided the text similar to that of Ibn Hishām, with the difference that the former leaves out the prelude '*ammā baʿd* (hereafter). See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 146; trans. Ismail K. Poonawala, *The last Years of The Prophet: the Formation of the State* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1988) 106. Al-Ṭabarī presents the following chain of authority: Ibn Ḥumayd (d. 248/862)—Salama (b. Faḍl, d. 191/806-7)—Ibn Isḥāq. For more on Ibn Ḥumayd, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325/1907) vol. 9, 127-31. For more on Salama b. Faḍl, see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 4, 153.

There are multiple English versions of *qawm yaʿtadūn*, which, for Guillaume, means "a hostile people." For Poonawala, the phrase means "a transgression people," whereas for Kister "a people who exceeds their bounds." See M. J. Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the Conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002) 14. On various sources of the letter, see Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa al-wathāʾiq al-siyāsiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 1985) 304; ʿAlī Aḥmadī, *Kitāb makātib al-rasūl* (n.p.: n.d.) vol. 1, 167.

[3] Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *al-Maghāzī*, 686.

[4] Al-Maqrīzī, '*Imtāʿ al-Asmāʾ bi mā li-l-Nabī min al-Aḥwāl wa-l-Amwāl wa-l-Ḥafada wa-l-Matāʿ* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Numaysī and Muḥammad Jāmil Ghāzī (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1981) vol. 1, 366.

[5] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 300.

[6] Al-Bayhaqī, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Afandī al-Naʿsānī (Cairo: al-Saʿāda, 1325/1906) vol. 1, 22-23. Little is known about him, except that, according to Brockelmann, he probably lived in the time of al-Muqtadir (295/908-320/932). This is earlier than the date available in his *Maḥāsin* in the above edition. See C. Brockelmann "Bayhaḳī" in *EI*².

[7] Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-muḍī*, ed. Sharf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudīr (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 2, 346.

central content of the letter is otherwise the same as that of Ibn Hishām. At the end of the message, however, an additional designation of Qurasyh appears, "*walakin quraysh qawm yaʿdatūn wa la yaʿdilūn*."[8]

According to al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), the letter would have read as follows:

> *Min musaylima rasūl allāh, ilā muḥammad rasūl allāh.*
> *ʿAmmā baʿd.*
> *Fa inna lanā niṣf al-arḍ, wa liquraysh niṣfuhā, walakin quraysh lā yanṣifūn. Wa-l-salām ʿalayk.*

Al-Balādhurī leaves out "*salām ʿalayk*" at the beginning of the letter as a greeting, but adds it at the end. Furthermore, he fails to include "*fa innī qad ushriktu fi al-amri maʿak,*" instead proceeding directly to "*fa inna lanā niṣf al-arḍ wa liquraysh niṣfuhā*". Another distinctive element of al-Balādhurī's redaction is the phrase: "*...walakin quraysh lā yanṣifūn*" (but Quraysh are not a just people: almost the same meaning as *yaʿtadūn*). Al-Balādhurī also adds that ʿAmr b. al-Jārūd al-Ḥanafī was the actual writer of the letter.[9]

From a much later generation, Ibn Kathīr (b. *circa* 700/1300 - d. 774/1373) presents the text of the letter on the authority of Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815) [10] and Ibn Isḥāq. Ibn Kathīr's redaction reads:

> *Min musaylima rasūl allāh, ilā muḥammad rasūl allāh.*
> *Salām ʿalayk, ʿammā baʿd.*
> *Fa innī qad ushriktu fi al-amri maʿak, fa inna lanā niṣf al-amr, wa liquraysh niṣf al-amr, walakin qurayshan qawm lā yaʿtadūn.*

Ibn Kathīr provides two distinctive elements here. First is his usage of *amr*/authority,' instead of *arḍ*/earth,' giving the phrase the meaning, "indeed, half of the authority belongs to us and the other half to the Quraysh." Secondly, in his version of the letter the people of Quraysh are described as not hostile (*lā yaʿtadūn*). This, of course, contradicts all other versions.[11] In another part of the *Bidāya*, interestingly, Ibn Kathīr adds that Musaylima begins his letter with the *Basmalla*.[12] The only remotely similar redaction is presented by Ibn

[8] Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fi-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 148.

[9] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 106.

[10] For more on Yūnus b. Bukayr, see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 11, 434-436; M. Muranyi, "Ibn Isḥāq's K. al-Maghāzī in der Riwāya von Yūnus b. Bukair. Bermerkungen zur frühen Überliferungsgeschichte" *JSAI* 14 (1991) 214-275; Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Uberlieferung über das Leben Muḥammads* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996) 42.

[11] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 5, 51. It is also likely that the editor of the work misreads this part. It may also be that the word '*lā*' means "indeed," serving not as a 'negation' but a 'stress.' In another work, Ibn Kathīr presents the reading "*yaʿtadūn*," with the absence of the negation "*lā*." See his *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Wāḥid (Cairo: 1386/1967) vol. 4, 98.

[12] See *Bidāya* vol. 6, 341.

Qayyim al-Jawziyya (691/1292-751/1350), whose introduction of the negation into this sentence merely yields, "*wa laysa Quraysh qawm yaʿdilūn* (but the Quraysh are not a just people)."[13] Additionally, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya misses the greeting "*salām ʿalayk*." Al-Ḥalabī's (975/1567-8- d. 1044/1635 H) redaction is the same as that of al-Jawziyya.[14] Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī (d. 942 H) has the same redaction, but he misses two elements: the greeting and the phrase: *wa li-quraysh niṣf al-amr*.[15]

Belonging to an earlier generation, Ibn Saʿd (168/784-230/784) gives more information about the correspondence between Musaylima and Muḥammad. According to Ibn Saʿd, it was Muḥammad who took the initiative of sending a message to Musaylima, calling him to Islam. In addition, Medina sent a delegation to Yamāma, headed by ʿAmr b. Umayya al-Ḍamīrī. In this regard, Musaylima responded to Muḥammad with the above letter. In terms of the style of presentation, Ibn Saʿd does not transmit its wording, only its meaning (*al-riwāya bi al-maʿnā*). He mentions the division of the land (*an yuqāsim al-arḍ*) and the designation of the Quraysh as an unjust people (*qawm lā yaʿdilūn*).[16] In terms of sources, Ibn Saʿd gives rather complicated *isnāds*, in the process of which he mixes one report with another.[17] The report is put under the heading: "Sending emissaries and letters of the Prophet to the kings, calling Arabians and others to Islam."

In addition, we have at least three shorter versions. The first is presented by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. early 5th/11th):

> *Min musaylima ilā muḥammad.*
> *ʿAmmā baʿd.*
> *Fa inna arḍ baynana wa bayna quraysh niṣfayn, walākin quraysh qawm yaẓlimūn.*[18]
>
> Indeed, the land between us and Quraysh [should be divided] half and half, but the Quraysh is an oppressive people.

[13] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-maʿād fī hady khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Miṣriyya, 1347/1928) vol. 3, 31.

[14] Al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīra al-amīn al-maʾmūn/Sīra al-ḥalabiyya*(Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, n.d.) vol. 3, 256.

[15] Al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā wa-l-rashād fī sīra khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Ibrahīm al-Tarzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUzbawī (Cairo: Wizāra Awkāf, Lajna Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 6, 495.

[16] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960) vol. 1, 273.

[17] *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 1, 264. Ibn Saʿd provides the following *isnād*:

Ibn Saʿd—al-Huthaym b. ʿĀdi

Dalham b. Ṣāliḥ and Abū Bakr al-Hudhaylī—ʿAbdalla b. Burayda—Burayda b. al-Ḥusayb al-Aslamī

Muḥammad b. Isḥāq—Yazīd b. Rummān and al-Zuhrī (d. 146/763)

Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAmmāra—Firās—al-Shuʿbī

[18] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ wa muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarāʾ wa-l-bulaghāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktaba al-Ḥayyāh, 1961) vol. 4, 431.

The second short version is found in al-Baghdādī's *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* (written in 725 H) and al-Baghāwī's (d. 516 H/1122 or earlier 510/1117) *Maʿālim*, which is printed on the margins of *al-Khāzin*.

Min musaylima rasūl allāh, ilā muḥammad rasūl allāh.
ʿAmmā baʿd.
Fa inna al-arḍ niṣfuhā lī wa niṣfuhā lak.[19]

The third is presented by al-Akhbarī/Yaʿqūbī (b. early 3th/9th-d. 292/905):
Innī ushriktu maʿak, fa laka niṣf al-arḍ, wa lī niṣfuhā, wa quraysh qawm lā yaʿdilūn.[20]

Literary Style of the Letter

D. Eickelman[21] suggests that the letter of Musaylima is probably authentic and not a forgery, arguing that the aforementioned letter represented an attempt on Musaylima's part to renew relations between Yamāma and Medina. These had broken down after the previous leader of the tribe Ḥanīfa, Hawdha b.ʿAlī (d. 630)—who had apparently promised to convert to Islam on the condition that he would be positioned as co-ruler and heir to Muḥammad—declined to do so. The prophet thus did not receive a satisfactory response from Hawdha (see further discussion in chapter six). Another reason is that the letter does not contain any allegations ridiculing or dishonoring Musaylima, which had they been present might have suggested later fabrication. These arguments in favor of its authenticity, however, remain unconvincing in themselves.

As regards letters in early Islamic literature generally, A. Noth warns us that it would be better to treat them not as historical but as literary documents.[22] Based on his observation of some letters, both the sending of letters during campaigns and the timing of their writing seem to be improbable, not to mention the distance between the sender and the receiver in some cases. An illustration of this is the correspondence between the caliph ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ during the war of Qādisiyya. Likewise, some letters preserved in early Islamic literature, such as the pre-Islamic correspondence between Abraha and the Negus of Abyssinia, contain improbable elements making it almost impossible to guarantee their authenticity. Furthermore, still based on Noth's analysis, letters such as these may be categorized as both "*Formen*/style," and "*Topoi*/theme," which are widespread in

[19] Alāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, T*afsīr al-khāzin* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, n.d.) vol. 2, 53. On the margin, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd al-Farrā al-Baghāwī, T*afsīr al-Baghāwī/Maʿālim al-tanzīl*.

[20] Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964) vol. 2, 120.

[21] Dale F. Eickelman, "Musaylima, An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia" *JESHO* 10 (1967) 47-8.

[22] Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen Frühislmischer Geschichtüberlieferung, Teil 1: Themen und Formen* (Bonn: Selbtsverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Unviersität Bonn, 1973) 71-74.

numerous genres of early literature.[23] The letter of Musaylima may be considered as *Formen*, since it employs the stylistic form of other letters in narrating stories, whereas as *Topos* it speaks of the common theme of an early call to Islam, performed by the Prophet and the later caliphs. It is true as well that one cannot avoid viewing the letter of Musaylima as an example of *qaṣṣ* style in presenting the narration.

Compared to other letters, that of Musaylima is close to the one attributed to al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd—who revolted against the Umayyads in 66/685-67/687 (see also a further discussion below in chapter seven)—in terms of style. Both figures are accused of being "*al-kadhdhāb*" (the arch-liar) in *tārīkh* literature. Communication between ʿAbd Raḥmān b. Saʿīd b. Qays and al-Mukhtār, for example, was in the form of a short letter, whose ending is typical of the numerous letters in Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* with closing greeting "peace be upon you (*salām ʿalayk*)."[24] The answer of al-Mukhtār to Ibn Qays was likewise short, with the same ending "peace be upon you."[25] Thus, both the cases of Musaylima and al-Mukhtār follow a certain pattern of narrating a story through the letter.

Aditionally, the allusion of the wording of Musaylima's letter presents in various texts and contexts. In one instance, a part of the letter is merely repeated, whereas in another its content is rejected. Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra* records how Musaylima's claim of partnership (*ushriktu*) with the Prophet Muḥammad on his return from Medina with the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa. "When they [members of the deputation] reached Yamāma the enemy of God [Musaylima] apostatized, made himself out to be a prophet and played the liar. He said, 'I am partner with him [Muḥammad] in the authority'..."[26]

As we know from the answering letter of Muḥammad (see chapter four below), Musaylima failed to come to an agreement on sharing prophethood and land with the Quraysh. Musaylima then proposed a similar offer to Sajāḥ, the leader of the tribe Tamīm, in which both would shared the claim to prophecy and the tribe's leadership. The conversation between the two also repeats the wording "half of the earth." Musaylima is reported to have said: "Half of the earth is to us, And half would be to Quraysh if they had acted rightly; but God has returned to you the half which Quraysh rejected, and has given it to you, even though it would have been to (Quraysh) had she accepted." Sajāḥ is

[23] E. Stetter has already indicated that Early Muslim literature has the tendency of *topoi* and *schemata* in terms of style. See his "Topoi und Schemata in Ḥadiṯ," Ph.D dissertation, Eberhard-Karls Universität zu Tübingen, 1965: 4-34, 35-122.

[24] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 39. For another example of the short letter of al-Mukhtār, see Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol 3, 39.

[25] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 39.

[26] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 576; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 636; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 137-8; *The History, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. F. M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 96; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 1/2, 55-56; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 298.

said to have answered: "The half is not returned except by those who incline. So carry the half to the cavalry you see as if they were dying of thirst.[27]

The story goes further, with Musaylima agreeing to give "the half" of the revenue of Yamāma to Sajāḥ. In addition, the wording "half" is repeated again in the treaty agreed between the two prophets.[28] Additionally, this message is also present in stanzas *Animals frog* D, E and F cited in chapter nine below.

Denial of the logical content of the "authority partnership" was offered by Thumāma b. Uthāl al-Ḥanafī,[29] who opposed the logic used by Musaylima, saying that: "Indeed, it does not compromise the two prophets in a single authority (*bi amr wāḥid*). Indeed, there is no prophet after Muḥammad [may God bless and give peace be upon him]. And, there is no [other] prophet who makes partnership with him."

Nevertheless, the above points are not enough in themselves to allow us to dismiss Musaylima's letter as a mere stylistic devices used by Ibn Isḥāq to tell the story. Nevertheless, there is another possible reason to doubt the authenticity of Musaylima's letter[30] in that many of the redactions, provided by numerous transmitters, contain modifications and alterations, causing each to differ from one another, some in terms of length and others in wording. The following discussion is devoted to this issue.

Various Versions after Ibn Isḥāq

In analyzing the transmission of the text by the aforementioned scholars, we can perhaps categorize them, in terms of *isnād*, into two groups. The first group consists of those who explicitly mention Ibn Isḥāq as their source, whereas those in the other group do not.

Applying J. Schacht's theory on the transmission of *ḥadīth* by observing the *isnāds* of traditions containing the letter, one may conclude that Ibn Isḥāq served as the "common link"[31] of these accounts, which clearly end with him.[32]

[27] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 272; trans. Donner, *The History* 93 [modification mine].

[28] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 275; trans. Donner, *The History* 96.

[29] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol 5, 550-551.

[30] The gap between Ibn Isḥāq and Musaylima is also problematic. The gap between the two is even wider ideologically, when one considers that Ibn Isḥāq—having inherited the narrative from those who had fought against Musaylima, that is, the caliph Abū Bakr and, ultimately, The Prophet in Medina —shows a certain antagonism towards Musaylima, neither standing up for his subject nor even properly representing him.

[31] More discussion on the "common link," see, for instance, J. Schacht, *The Origin of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950) 172; Juynboll, "Some Notes on Islam's First Fuqaha Distilled from Early Ḥadīth Literature" in *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1996) 296; H. Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey" *Arabica* 52, 2 (2005) 222-224.

[32] The transmission of Musaylima's letter is simply mursal and maqṭuʿ. It ends and begins with Ibn Isḥāq. For more on these technical terms, see, for instance, Juynboll, "Some Notes on Islam's First Fuqāhāʾ" in his *Studies on the Origins* 281-290.

Fig. 1.1

Sources who do not mention him explicitly	Sources who mention Ibn Isḥāq explicitly (b. 85/633/4 - d. 150/767).
Ya'qūbī(early 3th/9th-292/905)	Ibn Hishām (d. 218/834 or 213/828)
Al-Bayhaqī (5th H or earlier 3th H)	Ibn Sa'd (168/784-230/784) (mixed with other reports)
Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. early 5th/11th)	Balādhurī (but not directly) (d. 279/892)
Al-Baghāwī (d. 516 H/1122 or earlier 510/1117)	Al-Ṭabarī (224-5/839- 310/923)—Ibn Ḥumayd (d. 248/862)—Salama (d. 191/806-7)—Ibn Isḥāq
Ibn al-Athīr (555/1160-630/1223)	Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya(691/1292- 751/1350)
Al-Baghdādī/*al-Khazin* (w. 725 H)	Ibn Kathīr (*circa* 700/1300 - 774/1373)—Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815)—Ibn Isḥāq
Maqrīzī (766/1365-845/1441 H)	
Al-Ḥalabī (975/1567-8- 1044/1635)	Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348)
	Al-Anṣārī (d. 783/1381)
	Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī (d. 942 H)

From the table, however, one can see that the "growth of the *isnād*" or "back projection," a theory proposed by Schacht and refined by Juynboll, does not occur. Based on this theory, "the more imperfect the *isnād*, the older it is likely to be."[33] This is because later collectors were suspected of adding names to their *isnād* in order to justify it, given the greater reliability of report from the distant past. In this case, however, the principle does not work. For in fact we see that the most complete *isnāsd* are offered by those who came earlier (Ibn Sa'd, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī), whereas the later scholars—such as indicated in the right side group in the above table—give a less complete *isnāds*.[34]

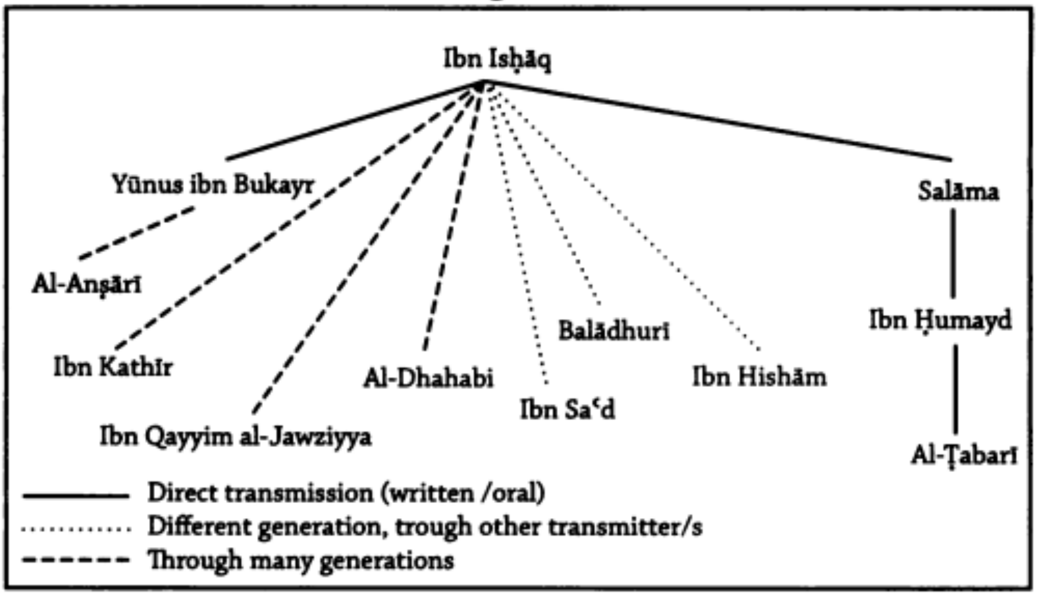
The following table shows that later generations of writers—such as Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Sa'd or al-Balādhurī—assigned the authority to Ibn Isḥāq.[35]

[33] Joseph Schacht, *The Origins* 163; Juynboll "Early Islamic Society, as Reflected in Its Use of Isnāds" in *Studies on the Origins* 166. See also a review on Juynboll and Schacht, for instance, by Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000) on Schacht pp. 12-17, on Juynboll pp. 26-31; H. Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions" 220.

[34] Nor can we derive any rule from this—such as, the earlier, the more complete—in contrast to Schacht. There is, after all, no certain regularity or principle. The earlier the *isnād*, the more complete, does not obtain justification either, as we observe that al-Ya'qūbī does not present the complete *isnād*, whereas Ibn Kathīr, who came much later, does. Additionally, the available sources tell us that the *isnād* did not "grow backward" regularly in terms of time, though, it was irregular. Only Ibn Sa'd gives indirectly the *isnād* containing information older than Ibn Isḥāq. There was no more effort to do so, afterwards.

[35] According to Marsden Jones, "the greater part of the sira was already formalized by the second century A.H." See his "Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī" *BSOAS*, 22, I (1959) 51. However, Schoeler, Motzki, and Görke have traced the materials of the sira back to earlier generation.

Fig. 1. 2



It seems that both Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī had access to written versions, as the wording from both is essentially the same. If not, the oral transmission to both authors from Ibn Isḥāq seems to have been quite consistent.[36] Ibn Sa'd, on the other hand, places two names in the *isnād* before Ibn Isḥāq: Ibn Rummān and al-Zuhrī (d. 146/763). However, Ibn Sa'd does not specifically refer to the letter of Musaylima, but mixes it with other letters of the Prophet. Additionally, he does not quote as precisely as Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī.[37]

Nonetheless, the various versions of the *matn* (text) of the letter indicate that the process of narrating the letter of Musaylima was not fixed in its final version with Ibn Isḥāq. The text evolved as it changed hands among the many

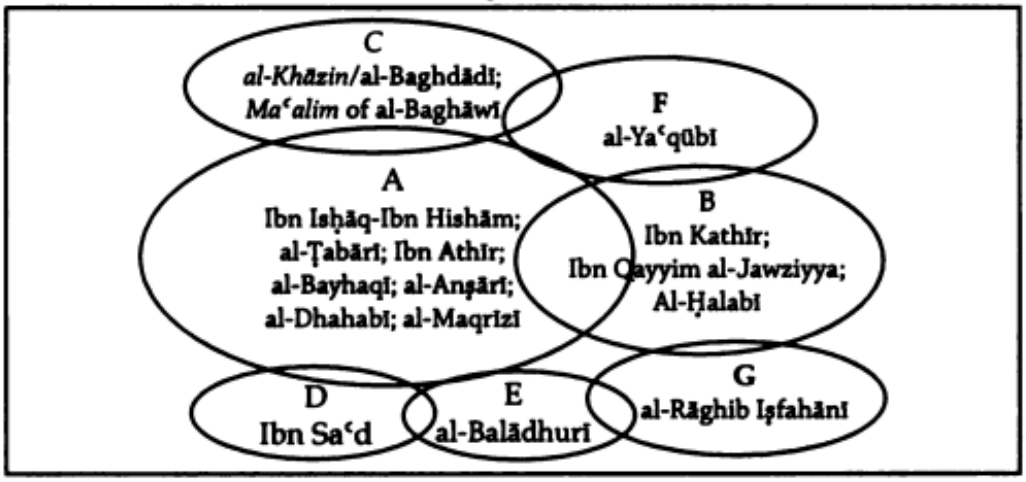
[36] For more discussion on this issue, see Ghada Osman, "Oral vs. Written Transmission: The Case of Ṭabarī and Ibn Sa'd" *Arabica*, 48 (2001): 66-80. We are told that Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815) and Ziyād b. 'Abdalla al-Bukkā'ī (d. 183/799) transmitted the Sīra materials from Ibn Isḥāq directly; from al-Bukkā'ī, Ibn Hishām acquired his material. In addition, Salama b. Faḍl (d. 191/806-7) also transmitted on the basis of the lectures of his master (*sam'*) and is said to have had a copy of the work. Via the transmission of Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dulābī (d. after 256/869) and Muḥammad b. Ḥamīd (d. 248/862), Al-Ṭabarī based his accounts on Salama's version. See, al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 3, 375; Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb/Mu'jam al-udabā'*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Cairo: Maṭba'a Hindiyya, 1913) vol. 6, 430; N. Abbot, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri 1, Historical Texts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 94; *GAS* vol. 1, 146; Muranyi, *Ibn Isḥāq*; Schoeler, *Charakter* 50.

[37] See n. 16 earlier. In addition, Ibn Sa'd was al-Wāqidī's (b. 130/747-8- d. 207/822) secretary. For this, Ibn Sa'd had a wide access to sources on which he might base the composition of his Ṭabaqāt. However, al-Wāqidī makes no mention of the letter of Musaylima in his Maghāzī. See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 1, 264; Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-maghāzī al-wāqidī*, ed. Marsden Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) 3 vols.

transmitters. The active role of the transmitters in redacting the delivered message of the letter is apparent.[38]

The intersection of various versions of Musaylima's letter can perhaps be drawn in the following figure.

Fig. 1. 3



The following observation can be made:

1. The oldest text is version A, which most early and some late Muslim scholars (from the 2nd to 8th centuries H) commonly present. This version features the most complete and detailed text, for it contains greeting, heading, and complete contents. The words *arḍ* or *amr* and the portrayal of the Quraysh as *yaʿtadūn* appear in the text.
2. Most of those who lived between the 7th and the 11th centuries H present version B, which also features a complete and detailed text, in which the greeting and the heading can be found. However, this version does not feature word *arḍ*, but uses *amr* instead. In designating the Quraysh, Ibn Kathīr uses the words *lā yaʿtadūn*, whereas Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and al-Ḥalabī use *laysa yaʿdilūn*. All in all, text B is largely similar in content to text A.
3. Text C is presented by only two scholars, whose works can be found in a single book. One scholar wrote his work in the main page, whereas the other did his work in the margin. Due to the date found in that work, version C can therefore be dated between the 5th and 8th centuries H. This version contains a greeting and the word *arḍ*, rather than *amr*, and leaves out all reference to the Quraysh.

[38] More on this issue, see, for instance, Sebastian Günther, "Modern Literary Theory Applied to Classical Arabic Texts, Ḥadīth Revisited," in *Understanding Near Eastern Literature: A Spectrum of Interdiciplinary Approaches*, ed. Verena Klemm and Beatrice Gruendler (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000) 174.

4. The second oldest among all the versions is text D (dated between the 2nd and 3rd centuries H), which Ibn Saʿd presents. However, as indicated above, he likely only reproduces its meaning, ignoring the precise wording. This version contains neither greeting nor heading, but it mentions the division of the land proposed by Musaylima to the Quraysh whom the text portrays as *la yaʿdilūn*. The word *amr* is also missing from this version.
5. Only al-Balādhuri (3rd century H) cites text E, which is characterized by the phrase *lā yansifūn* to describe the Quraysh. Musaylima's secretary, ʿAmr b. al-Jārūd al-Ḥanafī, is also mentioned.
6. Only al-Yaʿqūbī (3rd century H) presents text F, which is defective in at least the following respects: no greeting, no heading, and little content. It uses the word *amr*, not *arḍ*. The Quraysh, in this version, are described as *yaʿtadūn*.
7. Text G is the shortest of all the versions, both in terms of content and heading. Only al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (5th century H) offers this version.

In view of all versions, the text of the letter of Musaylima changed in the course of passing through many hands. Simply put, the text actually shrunk. A few parts were misquoted and replaced by later scholars. From the 2nd to the 11th centuries H, some parts went missing, with the latest redaction being the shortest. Interestingly, the most complete text is the oldest: that presented by Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī, which later scholars preferred. On the other hand, the most incomplete is the most recent, i.e., the one presented by al-Iṣfahānī. Yet al-Balādhurī and Ibn Saʿd, who came earlier, present rather incomplete texts.

In sum, the fate of the *isnād* of the letter of Musaylima is rather similar to that of its *matn*. Certain words disappeared, reappeared, or diminished. In a few cases, new words appeared in the later texts. Neither the *isnād* nor the *matn* grew regularly; in fact, it seems that some parts of them often diminished.

Besides confronting the differences in the content of the letter from one redaction to the other, we can also find certain similarities. Surprisingly, through ten centuries, almost all redactions still share the following skeleton of the scenario:

- Musaylima sends a letter to Muḥammad
- Musaylima claims prophethood
- Musaylima offers a division of the land and authority with Muḥammad

Interestingly, fifteen *ḥadīth* reports lend weight to the existence of the letter, which we will deal with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXECUTION OF THE EMISSARY

This chapter will present fifteen reports which lend support to the accounts that Musaylima sent a letter to Muḥammad. Some of these reports tell us that Ibn Nawwāḥa, to whom Musaylima entrusted his letter to the Prophet Muḥammad, was later executed under the order of Ibn Mas'ūd during the time of caliph 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (r. 23/644-35/656). Ibn Nawwāḥa was executed because he led the people of Ḥanīfa to recite Musaylima's *qur'ān* (reading/recital) or *muṣḥaf* (codex) in a mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa.

Fifteen Reports

The story of the execution of Ibn Nawwāḥa is told in the reports that are preserved in the works of Ibn Hishām,[1] al-Ṭabarī,[2] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (164/780-241/855),[3] al-Dārimī (181/797- 255/869),[4] Abū Dāwūd (202/817-275/889),[5] Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī (321/933,-405/1014),[6] al-Bayhaqī (384/994-

[1] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭba'a al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 600; trans. A. Guillaume's trans., *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 649 [modification mine].

[2] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1962) vol. 3, 146; trans. Ismail K. Poonawala, *The last Years of The Prophet: the Formation of the State* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1988) 106.

[3] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.) vol. 3, 488.

[4] Al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-dārimī* (Damascus: Bāb al-Barīd, 1349 H) vol. 2, 235, in the heading of "The Prohibition of Killing the Couriers."

[5] *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. jihād* vol. 2, 475.

[6] Ḥākim Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā-l-ṣaḥīḥayn fī-l-aḥādīth* (Riyad: Maktaba wa Maṭābi' al-Naṣr li-l-Ḥadīth, n.d.) vol. 4, 53-54.

458/1066),[7] and Ibn Kathīr.[8] Comparison between these reports will be made here, in terms of both *sanad* and *matn*. This will also help us examine the development of the text over time, from one transmitter to another.

The *Isnād* and summary of the *matn* of each report read as follows:

A. Ibn Hishām—Ibn Isḥāq—A Shaykh of Ashjaʿī—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī—Nuʿaym:

Two emissaries sent by Musaylima came to Muḥammad. Having read Musaylima's letter (*ḥīna qaraʾa*), the Prophet asked them 'What do you say about it?' They said that they said the same as Musaylima's letter. The Prophet said, 'By God, were it not that emissaries are not to be killed, I would behead the pair of you.' Then, the Prophet wrote the answer to Musaylima.

B. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal—ʿAbdalla b. Aḥmad— Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal —Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Rāzī—Salama b. Faḍl al-Anṣārī—Muḥammad b. Isḥāq-- Saʿd b. Ṭāriq al-Ashjaʿi/Abū Mālik—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī—his father/Nuʿaym:

Same content as report A.

C. Al-Dārimī—ʿAbdalla b. Saʿīd—Abū Bakr b. Iyās—ʿĀṣim—Abū Wāʾil—Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī:

While riding a horse through a grove of trees, Ibn Maʿīr passed by one of the mosques (*ʿala masjid min masājid*) of the tribe Ḥanīfa where he heard that many people still testified (*yashhadūn*) to the prophethood of Musaylima (*rasūl allah*). He then reported this to Ibn Masʿūd who then sent a policeman (*shurṭ*). As the people repented what they had committed, they were forgiven. Their leader, ʿAbdalla b. Nawwāḥa, however, was killed. When asked why Ibn Masʿūd forgave the others but not this man, Ibn Masʿūd related that Ibn al-Nawwāḥa had acted as one of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad.

D. Abū Dāwūd—Muḥammad b. ʿAmr al-Rāzī—Salama/b. al-Faḍl—Muḥammad b. Isḥāq—shaykh of Ashjaʿi/Saʿd b. Ṭāriq—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī—his father/Nuʿaym:

Same content as report A.

E. Abū Dāwūd—Muḥammad b. Kathīr—Sufyān—Abū Isḥāq—Hāritha b. Muḍārrab:

A man reported to ʿAbdalla [b. Masʿūd] that some people still believed in Musaylima (*yuʾminūn*) in a mosque (*masjid*) of the tribe Ḥanīfa. Upon ʿAbdalla's [b. Masʿud] arrival, they all repented but for Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. ʿAbdalla reminded the people about the sayings of the Prophet with regard to Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's role as one of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima

[7] Al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā* (n.p., Dāʾira al-Maʿārif, 1365H.) vol. 9, 211-212.

[8] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 5, 51-52.

to Muḥammad (See report A). Ibn Masʿūd then ordered Qarāḍa b. Kaʿb to decapitate the latter in a market. 'Does anyone want to see Ibn al-Nawwāḥa killed in the market?' Ibn Masʿūd exclaimed.

F. Al-Ṭabarī: Ibn Ḥumayd—Salama—Ibn Isḥāq—a Shaykh of Ashjaʿī:

Ibn Ḥumayd—ʿAlī b. Mujāhid—Abū Mālik al-Ashjaʿī—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī—Nuʿaym:

Same content as report A.

G. Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī—Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb—Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār—Yūnus—Ibn Bukayr—Ibn Isḥāq—Saʿd b. Ṭāriq—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd—Nuʿaym:

Same content as report A.

H. Ḥākim—Abū ʿAbdalla Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Ḥāfiẓ—Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb—Abū Jaʿfar b. ʿAwn—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbdalla al-Masʿūdī—al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbdalla al-Masʿūdī—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: A man reported to ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd that a group of people recited the reading (*qirāʾa*) of Musaylima. Ibn Masʿūd was surprised by the fact that these people still read a book other than that of God and testified to a prophet other than that of God after Islam had spread. It is said that they recited in a house (*dār*) and possessed a codex (*muṣḥaf*) of Musaylima. This occurred at the time of ʿUthmān. Accompanied by Qarāḍ*a*, ʿAbdalla went to the house and found the group to consist of eighty people. Having been interrogated, most of them repented and were sent to Shām. Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, however, refused to repent. ʿAbdalla [b. Masʿūd] then ordered Qarāḍ*a* to behead Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and throw away the head afterward. Qarāḍa did as the order said. ʿAbdalla then related that Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and Ibn ʿUthāl had served as emissaries sent by Musaylima to the Prophet. Report A is then told.

I. Ḥākim—(family of Masʿūdī) al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: Same content as report H. However, report I mentions: *yaqraʾūn min qurʾān Musaylima* (the people read the qurʾān of Musaylima).

J. Al-Bayhaqī —Abū ʿAbdalla al-Ḥāfiẓ and Abū Saʿīd b. Abī ʿAmr—Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb—Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-ʿAṭārī—Yūnus b. Bukayr—Ibn Isḥāq— Saʿd b. Ṭāriq—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd—his father/Nuʿaym:

Basically the same content as report A, but featuring a slightly different version in that the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad are explicitly described as having brought the letter (*bikitābih*).

K. Al-Bayhaqī—Abū ʿAlī al-Rudhabari—Muḥammad b. Bakr—Abū Dāwūd—Muḥammad b. Kathīr—Sufyān—Abū Isḥāq—Hāritha b. Maḍarrab:

Someone reported to Ibn Masʿūd that some people believed in Musaylima (*yuʾminūn*) in a mosque (*masjid*) of the tribe Ḥanīfa. Upon ʿAbdalla's [b. Masʿūd] arrival, they repented, with the exception of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa.

ʿAbdalla then related the sayings of the Prophet concerning Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's role as an emissary sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. Ibn Masʿūd then ordered Qarāḍa b. Kaʿb to decapitate Ibn al-Nawwāḥa in the market. 'Does anyone want to see Ibn al-Nawwāḥa killed in the market?' ʿAbdalla exclaimed.

L. Al-Bayhaqī—Abū Ṭāhir al-Faqīh—Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Qaṭṭān—Muhamad b. Yaḥyā—Abū ʿĀṣim—Sufyān—ʿĀṣim—Abū Wāʾil—ʿAbdalla [b. Masʿūd]:

The prophet said to Ibn al-Nawwāḥa: 'Had you not been an emissary, I would have killed you.'

M. Ibn Kathīr—Yūnus b. Bukayr—Ibn Isḥāq—Saʿd b. Ṭāriq—Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd-- his father/Nuʿaym:

Same content as report J.

N. Ibn Kathīr—Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī—al-Masʿūdī—ʿĀṣim–Abū Wāʾil–ʿUbaydalla b. Masʿūd:

Musaylima sent two emissaries—Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and Ibn ʿUthāl—to Muḥammad. The latter asked the two 'do you testify that I am the messenger of God?' [Surprisingly], the two said "*nashhadu anna Musaylima rasūl Allāh*"/we testify that Musaylima is the messenger of God. The prophet then said: 'I believe in God and [all] His messengers. Were I in the habit of killing emissary, I would have to kill you both.' ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd said that the *sunna* (tradition) was then established the prohibiting the killing of any emissaries.

O. Ibn Kathīr—Abū Zakariyya b. Abī Isḥāq al-Mazīnī—Abū ʿAbdalla Muḥammad b.Yaʿqūb—Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb—Jaʿfar b. ʿAwn—Ismaʿīl b. Abī Khālid—Qays b. Abī Ḥāshim:

A man reported to Ibn Masʿūd that some people recited a reading (*qirāʾa*) which was not what God had revealed to Muḥammad, such as: "*Wa-l-ṭāḥināt al-ṭaḥnan, wa-l-ʿājināt ajnan...*". They consisted of 70 people in one of the mosques of the tribe Ḥanīfa (*bi baʿḍi Masājid bi banī Ḥanīfa*), led by Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, whom ʿAbdalla b. Masʿud ordered someone to kill. The rest of them were then sent to Shām.

The Tendency towards Growth

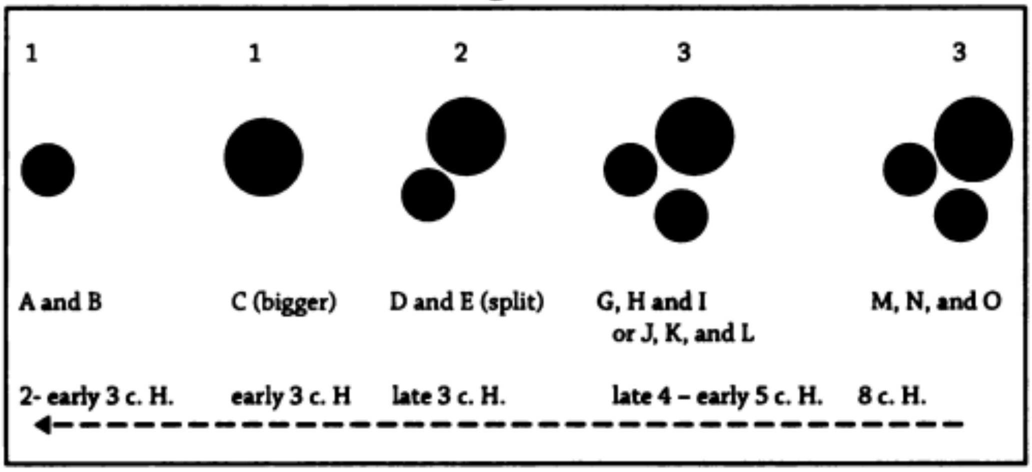
At first sight, the number of the reports from the 2nd to the 8th centuries H. (from Ibn Isḥāq to Ibn Kathīr) seems to increase in terms of quantity. To illustrate, Ibn Hishām and Ibn Ḥanbal present only a single short report (A and B). Al-Dārimī also presents only one report, which, however, features longer content (C) by combining it with other reports. Abū Dāwūd presents two reports by splitting the *matn* of al-Dārimī's report and providing each part its own independent *isnād* (D and E). Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, presents only

a single short report (F), whose content is the same as that of Ibn Hishām (A) and Ibn Ḥanbal (B). However, the later increase in the number of reports can also be indicated by the fact that the later collectors present three more detailed reports: Ḥākim (G, H, and I), al-Bayhaqī (J, K, and L) and Ibn Kathīr (M, N, and O).

Looking at the content of these aforementioned reports, one can also point to an expansive tendency in terms of their content: Ibn Hishām and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal preserve a report dealing only with the incident of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad. Al-Dārimī presents a longer report covering the later activities of the people of Ḥanīfa in their mosque, which led to the execution of their leader, Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. Furthermore, Ḥākim presents three reports: one about the story of the two emissaries, and two others about the activity of the people of Ḥanīfa in that mosque. In addition, besides Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, Ibn ʿUthāl is also said to have acted as an emissary sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. Similarly, al-Bayhaqī presents three reports: the first telling about the two emissaries, the second about an incident in a mosque belonging to the tribe Ḥanīfa, and the third explaining the role of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa as one of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. Likewise, Ibn Kathīr preserves three reports with more detailed information: the story of the two emissaries, the incident in that mosque, and a recalling of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's role as one of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad.

The following diagram describes the increasing number of reports:

Fig. 2.1



Given these facts, the principle of "the later the collection, the more detailed the reports"[9] seems to hold true. However, rather than accepting this

[9] See J. Schacht "Modernism and Traditionalism in a History of Islamic Law" in *MES* 1 (1965), 393; Marston Speight, "The Will of Saʿd b. a. Waqqāṣ: the Growth of a Tradition" *Der Islam* 50 (1973) 250; cf. Motzki, "Dating Muslim Traditions" 211-212.

principle without reservation, let us proceed here one by one in terms of both *matn* and *isnād*.

Analysis

To compare the account of Ibn Hishām—Ibn Isḥāq (A) and that of Ibn Ḥanbal—Ibn Isḥāq (B), although both share the same content, Ibn Ḥanbal seems to have added a more complete *isnād*. As seen above, Ibn Hishām merely refers to a Shaykh of Ashjaʿī as the authority upon whom Ibn Isḥāq founded his information. Here, the identity of this shaykh remains unclear. Yet Ibn Ḥanbal later identified this Shaykh as Saʿd b. Ṭāriq al-Ashjaʿī or Abū Mālik who transmitted the report from Salama b. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd al-Ashjaʿī. A growing number of transmitters in the *isnād* can be seen here. The *matn* of reports A and B, however, remains the same.

Examining report C of al-Dārimī, it is true that it contain a longer narration than A and B. However, a look at al-Dārimī's *isnād*, which is different from that of Ibn Isḥāq (A and B), suggests a rather different conclusion. Certainly, al-Dārimī does not mention Ibn Isḥāq in his transmission, which leads us to believe that al-Dārimī's long report is not a later evolution of that of Ibn Isḥāq. Indeed, each should be considered an indepent report coming from different transmitters. The question remains: Is there any connection between the two reports?

To begin with, imagine the story at the level of Ibn Isḥāq. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether Ibn Isḥāq was aware of the existence of the longer report C of Dārimī. However, by looking at the *isnād* provided by al-Dārimī, it seems that report C was already in circulation by the time of Ibn Isḥāq. Assuming that Ibn Isḥāq knew its existence, one may pose the following question: Why did he leave aside the longer story of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's execution? Why did he only preserve the story about the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad in his *Sīra*? To answer these, one may speculate that Ibn Isḥāq did so because the incident in the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa and the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa took place long after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, Ibn Isḥāq was not interested in recording this incident, but chose to focus only on the events that took place during Muhammad's lifetime in composing the Prophet's biography (*sīra*).

To deal with the story at the level of Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd, upon whom Ibn Isḥāq founded his authority (A and B), the difference between the two persons—Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd[10] and ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd—should be borne in

[10] Nuʿaym—whose complete pedigree is Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd b. ʿĀmir b. ʿUnayf b. Thaʿlaba b. Qunfad b. Khalawa b. Subayʿ Bakr b. Ashjaʿ—was also known as Abū Salama al-Ashjaʿī. Nuʿaym converted to Islam during the night of Khandaq. Some say that he died during the war of Jamal, whereas others date his death earlier, namely at the time of ʿUthmān. Interestingly, Nuʿaym is known for transmitting the above report. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 6, 461.

mind. Indeed, they were two different persons, each of whom told the story of two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. The difference between Nuʿaym and ʿAbdalla, each of whom acted as eyewitnesses to the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad, makes the matter clear. Considering Ibn Isḥāq's report (A and B) and al-Dārimī's (C)—since one report supports another—allows us to assume that Musaylima did in fact send two emissaries to Muḥammad. This is because we have two eyewitnesses: ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd and Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd, whose stories are different from one another, have different contexts, and are transmitted by different transmitters.

Turning our attention to the two reports recorded by Abū Dāwūd (D and E), report D is essentially the same as that of Ibn Ḥanbal (B) in terms of both *matn* and *isnād*, whereas E appears to be a different report. Report E also differs from report C of al-Dārimī, as the former offers a different perspective in relating the same event. Although both reports C and E contain the same stories (the people of Ḥanīfa in a mosque, the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, and his role as one of the two emissaries of Musaylima), the narrator of each report is different. Report C is based upon the narration of Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī,[11] whereas report E is based upon that of Ḥāritha b. Muḍārrab.[12] By comparison, Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī (C), who served as eyewitness to the event in the mosque, is more reliable than Hāritha (E), who did not witness that incident directly, but instead he heard the report about it from someone else (likely Ibn Maʿīr). At first sight, both reports C and E have no significant differences, except that report C mentions *yashhadūn*, whereas report E says *yuʾminūn*. As regards the actual execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, both Ibn Maʿīr and Hāritha appear to have been eyewitnesses to that event.

We can spell out the differences between reports C and E in the following way: 1) report C mentions only a policeman (*shurṭ*), whereas E provides a proper name, Qarāḍa b. Kaʿb; 2) report C tells us that someone asked Ibn Masʿūd why he forgave all the people with the exception of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, while report E directly relates Ibn Masʿūd's order to decapitate Ibn al-Nawwāḥa; 3) report C directly relates Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's role as one of the two emissaries of Musaylima, whereas report E adds more embellishment to the story of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's execution via Ibn Masʿūd's comments.

Reports C and E share the same content in the following respects: 1) both reports relate the activities of the remainder of Musaylima's followers in a mosque belonging to the tribe Ḥanīfa; 2) they, however, repented, and Ibn Masʿūd then forgave all of them with the exception of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa; 3) on

11 Unfortunately, Ibn Maʿīr's identity is unknown.

12 For more on Hāritha b. Muḍārrab al-ʿAbdi al-Kūfī, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325/1907) vol. 2, 166-167. As a Successor (tābiʿīn), he must therefore have been born after the death of The Prophet. In this regard, it is plausible to speculate that Ḥāritha was more or less a twenty year old man when Ibn al-Nawwāḥa was executed. With this age, Ḥāritha's act as an eyewitness to this event is acceptable.

this occasion, Ibn Masʿūd related the story of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad.

Report F of al-Ṭabarī features the same content and transmission as Ibn Hishām's report A and Ibn Ḥanbal's report B. Similarly, report G of Ḥākim features the same *isnād* as that of report B.

Report H of Ḥākim, however, deserves our special attention. The *isnād* of this report is characterized by several names of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, attached to the family of ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd.[13] By looking at the *isnād* more carefully, however, one finds the following weak point. It seems that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān did not directly transmit the report from his father, ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd, who is not mentioned explicitly in the *isnād*. Alternatively, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who was quite too young at the time of the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, cannot have been an eyewitness to that incident.[14]

The *matn* of report H preserves the core message of reports C and E, in which, however, the following embellishments can be found: 1) the followers of Musaylima consisting of eighty people[15] recited a certain reading (*qirāʾa*), which is also said to have been a *muṣḥaf*;[16] 2) this incident took place in a house (*dār*)—instead of a mosque—in the time of ʿUthmān;[17] 3) Ibn Masʿūd's statement of surprise is presented *in verbatim*;[18] 4) to force them to repent,

[13] The connection between al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 110 H.; see ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 321-322) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Masʿūd (d. 79 H.; see ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 6, 215-216) is not problematic. However, the transmission between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and his father, Ibn Masʿūd, contains a rather doubtful element. It is reported that when Ibn Masʿūd died, his son was only a six year old boy. It stands to reason to assume that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān hardly transmitted any reports from his father directly.

[14] In addition to n. 13 above, the exact date of Ibn Masʿūd's death is unclear—some say that he died before the death of ʿUmar, whereas others date his death later in 32/33 in Medina. It is also said that he died much later in Kūfa. See ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 4, 235. All in all, the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa must have taken place before the death of Ibn Masʿūd, whose order led to this incident.

[15] This specific number indicates a later estimation by any later transmitter.

[16] One may conclude that the word '*muṣḥaf*' was added by a later transmitter. That is, the word 'hearing/*samaʿ*' changed to 'reading/*qaraʾ*', which finally changed to 'codex/*muṣḥaf*'. What may confuse us is that in the *isnād* there is no mention of Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī. Thus, one can perhaps speculate about this that this story came into circulation freely in the Early Muslim society for a considerable time, with no attribution to a certain originator. One of the descendents of Ibn Masʿūd, one may assume, later claimed that story and then added the *isnād* to it.

[17] The place *dār*, instead of mosque, may also indicate an addition made by later transmitter, as the eyewitness to the incident, Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī, referred it to a mosque.

[18] These words reflect later additions made by later transmitters, as it seems impossible that anyone could have remembered exactly what Ibn Masʿūd had said. The situation portrayed in the statement of Ibn Masʿūd—that Islam had spread—confirms this. Indeed, the tendency towards 'growing' in terms of matn can be seen here. To illustrate this point, in report C Ibn Masʿūd comments only on the previous role of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. In report E, however, he comments on the dramatic execution, which took place in a market. Report H, in turn, records the surprising comments made by Ibn Masʿūd on the people who read Musaylima's '*muṣḥaf*' in a mosque.

they were then sent to Sham;[19] 5) having executed Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, Qarāḍa threw away the victim's head;[20] 6) besides Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, Ibn ʿUthāl is also said to have acted as another emissary sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad.[21] Given these facts, it seems clear that report H evolved due to the role played by later transmitters and that it came into circulation later than reports C and E did. It is hard to determine which transmitters were responsible for which changes; each transmitter mentioned in the *isnād* is a potential candidate. However, it should also be borne in mind that report H has a different transmission than C and E. In this sense, report H does not directly relate to reports C or E.

Comparing Ḥākim's report I with report H, whose *isnād* and *matn* appear to be the same, the differences between the two may be spelled out as follows: firstly, Ḥākim provides a simpler *isnād* in report I than he does in report H; and secondly, report I mentions Musaylima's qurʾān, whereas report H refers to his *muṣḥaf*.

Although reports H and I may be suspected to contain exegetical comments made by later transmitters (due to their more elaborated and detailed *matn*), we do not have to dismiss the information contained in them. The reports tell us that the event took place at the time of ʿUthmān, and that Musaylima had his own *muṣḥaf* or qurʾān. The first point seems to be an estimation made by later transmitters and is plausible, whereas the second point leads us to the following speculation. It is true that Ibn Maʿīr (C) does not inform us about the existence of a *muṣḥaf* or a qurʾān of Musaylima, for he was only concerned with the activities of the remaining followers of Musaylima in the mosque. However, it is plausible that such a document existed and was still read by his followers (for more arguments on the qurʾān belonging to Musaylima, see also chapters eight, nine, and ten below). Unfortunately, no report suggests that Ibn Masʿūd also destroyed Musaylima's qurʾān or *muṣḥaf*. Yet if these reports about the existence of Musaylima's scripture were merely invented by later narrators, then how can this fabrication be explained? Who would have benefited from it? We will further elaborate on these questions in chapter nine below, where we will attempt an analysis of the remaining fragments of Musaylima's qurʾān that later Muslim literature still preserves.

19 One may also wonder why these people were sent to Shām, not to Medina or Kūfa. Sending them to Medina seems to be more reasonable, as this city was the center of Islamic caliphate until the time of ʿUthmān. Sending them to Kūfa is also reasonable, as Ibn Masʿūd lived there. Many members of the tribes of Tamīm and Ḥanīfa also settled in Kūfa. Note as well that most of the Rabīʿa—including the tribe Ḥanīfa—allied to the faction of ʿAlī during his conflict with Muʿāwiya. In addition, Sajāḥ—the prophetess of the tribe Tamīm—died in Kūfa. Given the above considerations, one may speculate that the mention of Shām in the story contains a certain political propaganda, as the story was told during the Umayyad time.

20 This indicates later dramatization of the event made by later transmitters.

21 This new name was likely invented at a later time.

Nevertheless, one can perhaps speculate on the evolution of the above reports and particularly the relationship between the story of the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and the further elaboration on Musaylima. To illustrate this point, reports C and E only tell the story of the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, whereas more stories of Musaylima are later additionally offered in reports H and I. Moreover, it appears that many people preserved the story of Musaylima in their memories. Some transmitters, on the other hand, combined the two stories which became reports H and I. Thus, along with the people's wish to identify Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and with their curiosity about the role that he had previously played in the story of Musaylima, people then related the story of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa and Musaylima in the same report.

Al-Bayhaqī's report J, which is basically the same as report A, B, D, F and G in terms of *matn* and *isnād*, present new words '*bikītabih* (letter of Musaylima)' brought by two emissaries. On the other hand, it seems that al-Bayhaqī's report K—which is essentially the same as report E of Abū Dāwūd and, in fact, constitutes the same *matn* and *isnād* as those of report E—is relatively insignificant.

Turning to al-Bayhaqī's report L, which lacks the long narration made by Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī, we find that this report is instead attributed directly to the authority of Ibn Masʿūd, whose comments on the role of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa are also presented. It is interesting to see that there is no mention either of Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī in the *isnād* of report L. It remains unclear who replaced the authority of Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī with that of Ibn Masʿūd. What is clear is that ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd is much more authoritative than the obscure Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī, a factor that may have led to the replacement of the latter.

Finally, there are the three reports preserved by Ibn Kathīr (M, N, O). Report M is basically the same as report J of al-Bayhaqī in terms of *matn* and *isnād*, whereas report N offers the following new elements. Report N presents the name of Ibn ʿUthāl together with Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, who acted as the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. Interestingly, at the end of the transmission we find the name ʿUbaydalla [ʿAbdalla] b. Masʿūd,[22] who replaces Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī in this position, a fact that leads us to recall the same theory mentioned in analyzing report L above.

Report O of Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, constitutes a new *matn* and *isnād*. In this regard, report O offers another eyewitness to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, namely Qays b. Abī Ḥāzim.[23] Compared to report C, E, H

[22] It is likely that ʿUbaydalla—a name that I fail to find in both *Iṣāba* and *Tahdhīb* referring to either Companion or Successor—refers to ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd.

[23] For more on Qays (d. 84 or 97 H), a Companion of The Prophet, see ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 8, 387-389. However, the story about Qays is suffered from an improbable element. That is, he is said to have traveled a long distance to render an oath to The Prophet and Abū Bakr when he was only seven or eight years old. Nonetheless, it stands to reason to accept him as an eyewitness to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, as he was an adult at the time of ʿUthmān.

and I, report O offers two different elements: that the verses of Musaylima's scripture '*wa-l-ṭāḥināt ṭaḥnan*'[24] are directly cited and that the number of the people in the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa is specified as being only 70, instead of 80 (reports H and I). The first point can be regarded as a weak account, as it differs from the account given by the other eyewitness to the incident (Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī in report C). In this vein, report C contains more reliable information than report O does. Nonetheless, the specific number 70 (report O) or 80 (reports H and I) seems to be mere estimation added by the later narrators.

Having discussed one by one each of the aforementioned reports, we turn to classify them under their three motifs as follows:

Motif 1: The incident in the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa which led to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa (C, E, H, I, K, and O)

In the first motif, namely the activity of Musaylima's followers that took place in a mosque belonging to the tribe Ḥanīfa, certain changes of information are apparent. New information appears in one report, sometimes expands in another, and sometimes disappears elsewhere. Al-Dārimī, Abū Dāwūd, Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Kathīr (reports C, E, H, I, K and O) portray the activity in the mosque differently. Al-Dārimī reports that the people in that mosque testified to the prophethood of Musaylima, including Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. A policeman then was sent to dispose of him (report C). Abū Dāwūd, on the other hand, portrays the people as believing in Musaylima, implying that Ibn al-Nawwāḥa formed part of them, and that he was on this account executed in the market by Qarāḍ*a* b. Kaʿb (E). This story reveals more dramatic scenery and introduces a new figure in the person of Qarāḍ*a*. Ḥākim presents two versions (H and I), which are much more detailed accounts, with more anecdotal and dramatic portrayal (as we saw earlier). Al-Bayhaqī (K) presents the same account as that of Abū Dāwūd (E), whereas Ibn Kathīr (O) presents the specific words of one of Musaylima's verses. In addition, the *sanad* and *matn* of report O presented by Ibn Kathīr are totally new, even though no one's name is given or any mention made of the police wanting to kill Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. Thus, the information also shrinks.

As seen, each of the reports C, E, H, I, K and O relies on a different *isnād*, which unsurprisingly results in a different *matn*. Thus, we cannot conclude the tendency towards growth in these reports, a tendency that can only be drawn from the fact that the same *isnād* produced a larger *matn* in later times. Nevertheless, reports E and K, whose *matn* and *isnād* are essentially the same, deserve more careful attention. Certainly, al-Bayhaqī assigns the authority to Abū Dāwūd—through the interval of two transmitters (Abū ʿAlī al-Rudhabārī and Muḥammad b. Bakr)—and so the tendency towards growth, in this specific case, does not occur.

[24] For further discussion on Musaylima's verses, see chapters nine and ten below.

The above explanation leads us to conclude that the core message is that the activity of the followers of Musaylima continued even after his death in the time of Uthmān, which led to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa at the order of Ibn Masʿūd. This vital message survives in all reports originating from the early 3rd to the 8th centuries H. Are these reports reliable? Although critical examination is advisable, it seems that there is no reason to reject them entirely.

Motif 2: Two emissaries (indicated by all reports)

The aforementioned reports on the activity of the followers of Musaylima in a mosque belonging to the tribe Ḥanīfa contain another interesting story. With the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, his role as one of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad is revealed. Interestingly enough, Ibn Hishām, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Ṭabarī all preserve other reports on the presence of two emissaries of Musaylima and remark that both testified to his prophethood (A, B and F). As we have seen, however, these reports are shorter and contain no direct relation to the story of the activity of the followers of Musaylima, nor to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. Still, regarding the collection, these reports are older than the more detailed ones of the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa motif (with reference to Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*).

Looking at the story of the two emissaries of Musaylima, which is told by all of the abovementioned reports, it appears that al-Dārimī (C) offers a combination of the two emissaries motif with that of the mosque. However, al-Dārimī's account misses the information about the letter of Musaylima (C). Abū Dāwūd (D and E), on the other hand, seems to have completed the logical connection between the story of two emissaries and that of the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa. In this regard, he presents two reports. The first reclaims the short version of Ibn Isḥāq, whereas the second casts the same story as that of Abū Dāwūd but with a different *isnād*. Later collectors—Ḥākim (J, H, I), al-Bayhaqī (J, K, L), and Ibn Kathīr (M, N, O)—then followed the way in which Abū Dāwūd presents these stories. These three collectors, additionally, provide more information and present different variations. Ḥākim (H and I) provides another name for one of Musaylima's emissaries, namely Ibn ʿUthāl. On the other hand, al-Bayhaqī, besides repeating the account reported by Abū Dāwūd (E), asserts that the Prophet's threat was directed specifically at Ibn al-Nawwāḥa (L). Ibn Kathīr's most remarkable contribution in completing this story is in citing the wording of Musaylima's verses (O).

To conclude, each report contained in the many collections originating from different centuries makes its own unique contribution to the completion of the story of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad and of the activity of Musaylima's followers long after the death of both prophets. As such, these stories challenge us to interpret and to discover many meta-

narrations, or stories behind the stories. From a modest report concerning two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad; the context of the story was then discovered; the identity of the two emissaries was provided; other roles that they had played in the story of Musaylima were then told; accounts of the qurʿān of Musaylima and the manner of the execution Ibn al-Nawwāḥa were also provided; etc. Expanding overtime, the story attracted increments and refinements in terms of the flow of narration, and the development, growth, and improvement of the scenario.

Of the aforementioned reports, A, B, D, F, G, J, and M share the same *isnād*, which reaches back to the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, the common link of these reports.

By comparison, the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa motif can be dated to as late as the collector of the reports, Abū Dāwūd (the third century H.). It is therefore more recent than the two emissaries motif, which in reference to Ibn Isḥāq's life must be dated as far back as the second century H. [25]The younger motif of course tells a later story, from the time of ʿUthmān, whereas the older one focuses on an earlier incident, involving Musaylima and Muḥammad. The younger motif, however, is supported by many different transmissions, whereas the older one depends on only a single strand, in which Ibn Isḥāq mentions the older authority of Nuʿaym. On this basis, the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa motif contains a more reliable story than the two emissaries motif does. However, if we look at the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa motif more elaborately, we find that it also contains the older motif, namely the two emissaries motif. Thus, the later motif supports the earlier one.

Moreover, we should also consider that these reports contain some useful elements, which may help us reconstruct another story. First of all, they contain normal information on that contitutes neither a mythological tale nor a miraculous deed. Nor do they speak of eschatological matters or the hereafter. Political bias and interest in the content of the reports is likewise largerly absent, if we take the conflicting parties in the first century of Hijra—i.e., several civil wars—into account. The reports do not glorify a certain party, sect, or school of thought. From this point of view, we have the possibility of using these reports for the purpose of historical evidence.[26]

Surprisingly, the reports contain living and operative elements; in short, they are not dead texts. They speak to the practice of giving security guarantees for emissaries; and in both the Umayyad and Abbasid empires, there was

[25] These reports can be dated older, if we consider the transmitters mentioned in the *isnād* as historical persons; however, for the sake of our discussion we take the written document as a measurement.

[26] See, for instance, Noth's proposal of how we use certain materials even drawn from fictional works as historical evidence in his "Fiktion als historische Quelle" in *Story-telling in the framework of non-fictional Arabic literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrasovitz, 1998): 473-487.

a constant flow of diplomatic relations consisting in exchange of emissaries with neighboring rulers.[27] Finally, the most important element to consider in our discussion of Musaylima is the promise of death of those who believed in his prophethood, a threat that was still operative whenever this report was retold.

Motif 3: Completing the narration, Ibn al-Nawwāḥa (C, E, H, I, K, L, N, and O) and Ibn ʿUthāl (H, I, and N).

Due to the appearance of the two names in the later reports, the schema of the story of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad can be seen to have been refined. In the early report of Ibn Hishām-Ibn Isḥāq (A) and Ibn Isḥāq without Ibn Hishām (B, F, D, G, J and M), the identity of the two emissaries remain unknown. Ibn al-Nawwāḥa then appears in the story, which itself serves as a context to the earlier report about two emissaries. As was indicated, if the execution historically took place, his role as an emissary of Musaylima may have been provided later by Ibn Masʿūd, an assumption that further leads us to wonder whether or not Ibn Masʿūd merely invented the story. Given this possibility, there are at least two others. The first is that the invented story might have strengthened the justification given by Ibn Masʿūd for commanding the execution, which in the report was attributed to Ibn al-Nawwāḥa's role in leading the people to practice Musaylima's cult. Secondly, it might have been that later transmitters invented the story by inserting the figure of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa in the early story of the two emissaries of Musaylima. In other words, the later transmitters may have played a part in connecting the two reports and giving Ibn al-Nawwāḥa a role as an emissary sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad.

In terms of the second possibility, however, it is unlikely that the collectors of the reports were directly responsible for doing so. If it was inserted, this, must have taken place much earlier. Clearly, neither Ibn Kathīr nor al-Bayhaqī invented these stories out of nowhere and nothing. Al-Bayhaqī, for instance, ascribed the authority for the role of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa to Abū Dāwūd al-Sajistānī, who, in turn, assigned the authority to Muḥammad b. Kathīr (d. 216-219 H).[28] It is probable therefore that these two names, reported by both collectors, existed earlier than their collections.

In short, Ibn al-Nawwāḥa seems to have been historical figure, who encouraged people to practice Musaylima's cult, and who then was executed. What is uncertain is his relation to the story of two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. In fact, Ibn Isḥāq's reports, which forced later sources to come up with a name for the other, indentified as Ibn ʿUthāl. This name appears

[27] Al-Dārimī and al-Bayhaqī place the reports in the heading of "Prohibition of Killing the Couriers."

[28] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 9, 415-417.

first at a later point in the development of the story with Ḥākim (H and I) and Ibn Kathīr (N). Ibn Kathīr, as he mentions explicitly in the *isnād*, took the name from Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. Baṣra 203 H).[29] It is thus probable that the name of Ibn ʿUthāl emerged around that period, if not somewhat earlier.[30]

To sum up, the story of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa was originally part of the tribe Ḥanīfa mosque motif, but this figure then was also related to the story of the two emissaries during his execution. As with the emergence of the identity of Ibn ʿUthāl in the later report, the scenario of the story of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad is refined, and the two motifs—the mosque and the two emissaries motifs—are perfectly bridged.

Reconstructing the Execution

In order to conceive of how the story developed during the time of ʿUthmān, imagine the spread of the information prior to the collection of reports A-O. To do so, however, depends on our pre-conditional assumption as to whether or not we can believe in the reliability of the oral transmission between 10/631-632 H.—when Musaylima sent the letter to Muḥammad—and the early second century—when Ibn Isḥāq wrote his *Sīra*.[31] Having analyzed the *isnād* of the emissary motif (A, B, D, F, G, J, and M), indeed, the transmissions form two strands: Ibn Isḥāq—Nuʿaym b. Masʿud and al-Dārimī—Ibn Masʿūd.[32] The problem remains whether these names were historical persons or were mere inventions by later transmitters.[33] The second

[29] Or Sulaymān b. Dāwūd. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 4, 183-186; vol. 12, 89.

[30] Interestingly, according to al-Bukhārī in his *Tārīkh al-kabīr*, this emissary was called Wabar b. Mashahhar. According to a report, Wabar testified to The Prophethood of both Muḥammad and that of Musaylima. Then Muhammad responded, "I testify by the amount of dust in the desert and on the grave that Musaylima is a liar." Upon his repentance, Wabar learnt the Qurʾān. After Muḥammad's death, Wabar returned to Yamāma, opposing Musaylima until Khālid's arrival there (*Tārīkh al-kabīr* vol. 4/2, 183-184 n. 2639); al-Dāruquṭnī (d. 380), *al-Muʾtalif wa-l-mukhtalif*, ed. Muwaffaq b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿAbd al-Qādir (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1406/1986) vol. 4, 2081; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 6, 598-599; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud al-ghāba fi maʿrifah al-ṣaḥāba* (n.p.; n.d.) vol. 5, 437; al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1373/1953) vol. 4/2, 44.

[31] Michael Cook writes: "Traditionist literature preserves substantially authentic materials from the second half of the second century; if handled carefully, it can tell a good deal about the first half of the second century; but it is not in general useable as evidence for a period anterior to that...". See his "The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam" *Arabica* 44 (1997) 490.

[32] According to Juynboll, "such a single strand does not confirm the historicity of the cl's [common link] transmission of a tradition to later generations." See Juynboll, "Nāfiʿ, the Mawlā of Ibn ʿUmar, and his Position in Muslim Ḥadīth Literature" in *Studies on the Origins*, 211.

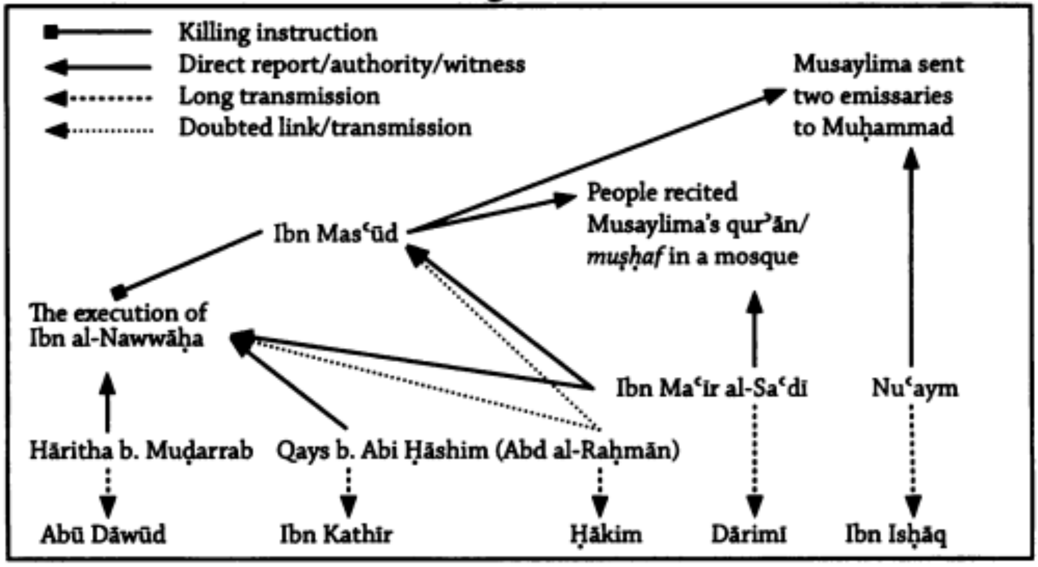
[33] See, for instance, Juynboll's analysis of *isnād* in a number of articles in *Studies on the Origins*: i.e., "Some Notes on Islam's First Fuqahāʾ Distilled from Early Ḥadīth Literature" pp. 290-292. Juynboll argues for the birth of *isnād* during the second civil war 68/683-73/693, when ʿAbdalla b. al-Zubayr proclaimed a counter-caliphate in Mecca against the caliphate of Marwān b. ʿAbd al-Mālik in Damascus. To present Juynboll's words, "[i]ndeed in many cases

assumption could mean of course that there was neither a Musaylima (or at least no such Musaylima), nor a letter, nor the two emissaries. It would mean that everything must have been wholly or partly fabricated by Ibn Isḥāq or other collectors.

Assuming, however, that there is some truth to the reports, the task of dating their core message is needed. Another non-*ḥadīth* report is provided by Hishām al-Kalbī (120/737-204/819), who tells us that Ibn al-Nawwāḥa was killed at the orders of Ibn Mas'ūd in Kūfa, due to his belief in the prophethood of Musaylima.[34] In another passage, al-Kalbī reports that the teachings of Musaylima survived until the time of 'Uthmān (23/644-35/656).[35] Based on this report and on our belief that *ḥadīth* and non-*ḥadīth* reports can be used in support of each other when reconstructing historical narrative, we may take the further step of drawing the conclusion that the core message of the reports (C, E, H, I, K, and O) may be dated as early as 'Uthmān's time.

Returning to the *isnāds* and *matns* of reports A-O, this allows us to reconstruct how the story behind telling the stories—two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muhammad; the religious activities of the people in the mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa; the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa; and the spread of news at the level of eyewitness—evolved. This can be shown in the following diagram:

Fig. 2. 2



the transmitters may not even be historical figures, these links being nothing but inventions of later collectors." See also his "Early Islamic society, as Reflected in Its Use of Isnāds" in *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1996) 157; 191. See also Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 179; idem, *Sectarian Millieu: The Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 81.

34 al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab li ibn al-kalbī*, ed. Maḥmūd Firdaws al-'Aẓim and Maḥmūd Fakhūrī (Damascus: Dār al-Yaqda al-'Arabiyya, 1406/1985) Vol. 2, 269.

35 al-Kalbī, *Jamharat*, Vol. 1, 174: "Wa lam tazal musaylima bāqiyya ilā ayyām 'uthmān."

Explanation:

- Ibn Masʿūd and Nuʿaym may be seen as 'the common links' for the story that Musaylima sent two emissaries to Muḥammad. The difference: Ibn Masʿūd told the story during the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, whereas Nuʿaym did that with no particular context.
- Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī, who passed by a mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa, reported to Ibn Masʿūd about the activity of the followers of Musaylima led by Ibn al-Nawwāḥa.
- Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī was apparently the only eyewitness to the activity of the followers of Musaylima in a mosque of the tribe Ḥanīfa.
- Ibn Masʿūd, then, ordered the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa.
- Ibn Maʿīr al-Saʿdī, Qays b. Abī Ḥāshim, and Hāritha b. Muḍarrab were eyewitnesses to the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa. We cast doubt on this role in the case of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Masʿūd, however, as indicated ealier.
- These three men then told the story of the event to the next transmitters. These three can be seen as the common link of the 'execution motif'.

Viewing the reports as a whole, the theory of 'back-projection' seems to work here. That is, while telling about the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, the above transmitters also recounted the previous story of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad.

Looking at the letter of Musaylima to Muhammad, which is said to have been brought by the two couriers, it is plausible to imagine that information about the existence of the letter was still kept alive in the minds of the people. It circulated, at least, in Medina, where Ibn Isḥāq was based and where he wrote as part of the Medinan historical school before moving to Hīra and then to Baghdad. It may also well be that the information also circulated in Kūfa, Baṣra, or Baghdad, where many people from Yamāma had moved and settled.

Furthermore, this speculation only holds for the existence of news about the letter of Musaylima, not necessarily for the actual text of the letter of Musaylima prior to Ibn Isḥāq. The difference between the two should be kept in mind. In this regard, one may further want to know: What were the stages between news of its existence and its being given its wording?

If the wording of the letter was reconstructed, it is nevertheless in accordance with the accounts of C, E, H, I, K and O. This leads us to further speculate: It was said that 'two couriers' brought the letter of Musaylima to Muḥammad and testified as to what was written. The two even declared publicly: "*nashhadu anna musaylima rasūl allāh.*" This is in accordance with the various redactions of the letter of Musaylima stating: "*min musaylima rasūl allah, ila muḥammad rasūl allah.*" Since Ibn Isḥāq is present in the *isnād* of the

reports, it is plausible to assume that he, as the first narrator, recounted and reclaimed the composition of the letter.[36]

Equally interesting is that, according to early Muslim literature, the correspondence between the Prophets of Medina and Yamāma continued with Muḥammad's response to Musaylima's letter. However, before dealing with the text of Muḥammad's answer (see chapter four), let us re-read the letter of Musaylima, and put the text in its context.

▸•◂

[36] The wording that has reached us—so far on the basis of our analysis—comes from Ibn Isḥāq. We cannot ascribe it to an earlier generation due to the absence of explanation or *sanad*. Until such a evidence is found, we can only assume that Ibn Isḥāq was the first person to recount it, as part of his style of narrating the *qass*. However, based on the aforementioned considerations regarding the letter's authorship, we are led to a further assumption that Ibn Isḥāq did not merely invent the text out of thin air. Along with this, Ella Landau-Tasseron also argues similarly with regard to the reports transmitted by Sayf b. ʿUmar; see her "Sayf ibn ʿUmar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship," *Der Islam*, 67 (1990) 22.

Recent investigation of the materials of *sīra* and *Maghāzī* yields fruitful result. G. Schoeler traces back the linkage among Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 146/763), ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (b. 23/643-d. 93/711-12), and ʿĀʾisha. See, Andreas Görke and Gregor Schoeler, "Reconstructing the Earliest *Sīra* Texts: the Hiǧra in the Corpus of ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr" *Der Islam*, 82 (2005): 210-220; Gregor Schoeler, "ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr" in *EI*². See also his reconstruction of the *ḥadīth ifk* (the controversy involving ʿĀʾisha) and the *ḥadīth iqraʾ* (regarding the first revelation of the Qurʾān) in his Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Uberlieferung über das Leben Muḥammads* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996). A review on Schoeler, see, for instance, by W. Raven, "The Biography of The Prophet and Its Scriptural Basis" in Stefan Leder, ed., *Story-telling* 421-432.

H. Motzki also traces the flow of the transmission and narration of the murder of Ibn Abī Ḥuqayq. See Harald Motzki, "The murder of Ibn Abī Ḥuqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some Maghazi-reports" in *The Biography of Muḥammad, the Issue of the Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 170-239.

U. Rubin furthermore speculates that the materials of *sīra* and those of the Qurʾān may have their origin in the same sources from the early formation of *umma*, with the former serving as its history, and the latter as its Scripture. See Uri Rubin, "The Life of Muḥammad and the Qurʾān: the Case of Muḥammad's Hijra" *JSAI* 28 (2003): 56-57. See also his attempt in reconstructing the materials of the biography of The Prophet, *The Eyes of Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as viewed by the Early Muslims* (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995).

Chapter Three

Re-Reading the Letter

Il n'y a pas de hors-context (there is nothing outside context)
(Derrida)[1]

We know that the text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of an Author-God) but multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture.
(Roland Barthes)[2]

Having discussed the matters surrounding the authenticity, authorship, and the dating of the text of the letter of Musaylima in chapter one and two, let us read it once again. Indeed, the text deserves serious attention, for the following reasons.

The letter contains the basic story of Musaylima. Had the letter been forged after the death of Musaylima (from 12 H/632 to the time of Ibn Isḥāq/d. 150/767), the fabrication is perfect and must have been done by someone who had mastered the official political correspondence of the era. At the same time, the content relates the basic narration of Musaylima, containing: 1) the

[1] "Afterward: Toward an Ethic of Discussion," trans. Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) 135; Royle, *Derrida* 65.

[2] R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, essays selected and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977) 146; as quoted by Jonathan Culler, *Roland Barthes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 85.

sender, 2) the recipient, and 3) the message. To present again the redaction preserved by Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī:

Fig. 3.1

Text	**Explanation**
From Musaylima	The sender: clear, short, no distortion
the messenger of God	The status of the sender, and part of the message: the declaration of his prophethood
to Muḥammad the messenger of God	The recipient, audience/reader, recognition of his status
Peace be upon you	Standard greeting in numerous letters preserved in many genres of Muslim literature, used in Umayyad and Abbasid time, basic element
Hereafter	To the main subject, standard direct reference to the subject, without any embellishment
Indeed, I have been made partner with you in authority. To us belongs half of the earth and to Quraysh the other half	Short message, clear, contains vital proposal of sharing authority and territory
....but Quraysh are people who transgress	Supplemental message, the most problematic part, for it portrays the negative character of the Quraysh

In reading the text, it is best to remember Derrida's warning, "Be alert to these invisible quotation marks, even within a word."[3] In reading the letter, we can perhaps detect invisible quotation marks around the claim 1) "the messenger of God (*rasūl Allah*)" linking it with the claim 2) "half of the earth (*niṣf al-arḍ*)." These two fundamental aspects explain what kind of 3) "authority (*amr*)" Musaylima means. Both prophethood and political aspects are clearly declared, implying their firm relationship. One may conclude, furthermore, from reading the letter, that both prophethood—as expressed in "the messenger of God"—and the sovereignty over land—as expressed in "the half of the earth" belonging to 4) "Quraysh"—are important parts of this concept of authority.

I would like to argue, in this regard, that whether the letter is authentic or a forgery, the content of the letter conveys certain concepts which call for explanation. The words, the phrase, and the concept are, as I said before, not a dead text but alive and operative in the literature. Still, the content of the letter can be placed in a certain historical context. Here, the context refers to the evolution of the concept of prophethood, authority, and the portrayal of the Quraysh in the time-span between Musaylima and Ibn Isḥāq.

3 Derrida, "Living on", trans. James Hulbert, in Harold Bloom, et. al., *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) 76; Royle, *Jacques Derrida* (London: Routledge, 2003) 1.

One can perhaps argue that the letter is merely a literary exercise by Ibn Isḥāq meant to attract his audience, who took notes and memorized it. His *qass* style, which still impresses us, challenges us to re-read and to assign new interpretation. Let us, therefore, now seek a context in which the text of the letter makes more sense.

Seeking the Context

Imagining ourselves among the audience that Ibn Isḥāq addressed, we have to reset the text in its context. In what context can the challenge of prophethood be said to be situated? What kinds of significant meanings may be unearthed? What is the relation between the content of the letter and the historical process behind the evolution of the concept of prophethood and authority?

In order to find the context of the letter and to place it within a situation by which it may be understood, let us summarize some of the keywords that are explicitly declared:

- Messenger of God (*rasūl Allāh*)
- Earth (*arḍ*)[4]
- Authority (*amr*)
- The tribe of Quraysh

In order to find the answers to the aforementioned questions with reference to these four words, our search must take in a broad historical context, ranging at least from the time of Musaylima to that of Ibn Isḥāq. The discussion in the following pages will therefore proceed in the following manner: focusing on these four themes, tracing their development from the time of Musaylima to that of Ibn Isḥāq. In addition, besides looking at the development of the meaning of each word, we will also seek the connections among them. In doing so, we will start with the last in the list in order to provide a historical grounding to the discussion.

The Quraysh in Making

We are two families of Quraysh who will be worshipped instead of God, we and the Banu Umayya
(Muḥammad b. Ḥanafiyya, a son of ʿAlī).[5]

[4] Kister interprets this by relating it to issues of land tenure and the policy of the ownership of uncultivated lands during the lifetime of the Prophet; see his Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002) 34-37. However, one may also consider other interpretations, such as (1) putting the theme in its broader context and (2) relating it more to the problems of authority in the realm of politics and religion in the Early Muslim community.

[5] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957) vol. 5, 94; English version from Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph, Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)104.

When one reads the letter of Musaylima and considers its *matn* (the content of the narrative), one naturally sees that the focus is on the two main characters: Musaylima—who sent the letter and simply served as the antagonist—and Muḥammad—who received it and served as the protagonist. From this perspective, the chronology suggested by the narration seems to coincide with the end of the year 10/631-632, as Ibn Isḥāq reports it. This was the time when the Muslim community of Medina had finally established itself. The major victories had by that point been won in the course of many campaigns (*maghāzī*). In the same year, deputies from various Arab tribes were sent to acknowledged the sovereignty of Medina and to accept Islam. The tribe of Ḥanīfa, to which Musaylima belonged, also sent its delegation (a matter that we will further discuss in chapter five below). But how many timeframes are hidden in the letter? Is it only that of Muḥammad-Musaylima as suggested by the written *sīra*? Or does it allude to Abū Bakr's anxieties over some Arab tribal movements against Medina? Or is there something of Ibn Isḥāq's time in his retelling of the letter?

Still, taking the *matn* at face value, one is confronted with some serious dilemmas. First of all, there is the specification of the tribe Quraysh, whom the letter describes as "*qawm yaʿtadūn, la yanṣifūn, la yaʿdilūn, yaẓlimūn*" (see various texts in chapter one above). The question is, however, which Quraysh? Which generation? Are they the descendents of Fihr, Ghālib, Luʿay, Kaʿb, Murra, Kilāb, Zuhra, ʿAbd al-Manāf, and al-Muṭṭ*alib*,[6] a line to which the recipient of the letter, Muḥammad the messenger of God, no doubt belonged? Are they the Qurayshite Companions of the prophet, whose excellent qualities are recorded in *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*,[7] in Bukhari's *Kitāb faḍā'il aṣḥāb al-nabī*,[8] or in al-Tirmidhī's *Kitāb manāqib*?[9] In contradistinction to the letter of Musaylima, all of these sources report the excellencies of the prominent Qurayshite Companions, such as Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. Or does it refer to the later Qurayshite generation, which held the same high politico-theological position under both the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, such as the descendents of ʿAbd al-Shams and those of Hashīm?

6 Caskel, *Ǧamharāt an-Nasab, das geneologische Werk des Hišam ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) vol. 1, 128, table 4; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī finūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Ḥātim (Cairo: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī al-Muaʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma, 1383/1963) vol. 2, 352-362; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 1, 1; Guillaume, *The Life* 3; W. Montgomery Watt, "Kuraysh" *EI²*, 435; Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) 7.

7 Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) vol. 2, 1021-1085.

8 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) vol. 2, 718-742.

9 Tirmidhī, *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) vol. 2, 935-994.

It is Donner[10] who shows us the implicit meaning of the letter of Musaylima in its offer to share authority with the Quraysh tribe. As he sees it, the Quraysh had emerged as a new ruling political elite in the late Medinan period, leading to the solidification of the Islamic state and *umma* (community of believers). The reference in the letter to "partnership" implies recognition of a "senior partner" in the Quraysh. Keeping to Donner's argument, it seems that the letter implies that the concept of prophethood and authority was ti be valid only in the time of the Prophet, as suggested by the *sīra*. The Quraysh mentioned in the letter must therefore refer only to the tribe as it existed in the time of the Prophet.

However, from our perspective, the Quraysh mentioned in the letter may well extend to include the tribe which of the post-letter phase as well, especially as we are not sure about the authenticity of the letter. It cannot be doubted that Ibn Isḥāq, whose active role lies in retelling and perhaps even recomposing the letter, is present in the letter (see chapter two earlier). If the letter is substantially authentic, its reenactment indicates that the concept it conveys was still operative and valid at the time of the narrator. Thus, the letter likely mirrors the reality not only of the time of Muḥammad-Musaylima but also to that of Musaylima-Ibn Isḥāq.

Indeed, the legacy of Qurayshite power in the realm of politico-theological authority and community leadership continued down to the time of Ibn Isḥāq. Even the first narrator of the letter of Musaylima, Ibn Isḥāq, had a close relationship to the Qurayshite caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136/754-58/775) of the Abbasid dynasty. It should be kept in mind therefore that mentioning the tribe Quraysh in the letter does not necessarily limit it to the generation of Musaylima-Muḥammad. In fact, Qurayshite figures, in the post-prophethood era, still played a prominent theological and political role, as evidenced by the succession to the office of caliphate by the four rightly guided caliphs (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib) to the number of Umayyad and Abbasid rulers. The message of the letter, thus, may reflect the image and the image production of the Quraysh from the time of Musaylima as well as by a time of the transmitter of the letter, i.e., Ibn Isḥāq. Thus, to which Quraysh the phrase "*qawm yaʿtadūn*" contained in the letter of Musaylima refers remains open to interpretation.

Another striking fact is that from the time of the letter of Musaylima to that of its inclusion in the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq, many caliphs spent considerable effort in researching the lineage of the Quraysh to legitimate their office, a project that remained vital for generations. It is said that Abū Bakr, due to his expertise in identifying the pedigree of many Arabian tribes, was entrusted by the Prophet Muḥammad as an adviser in the process of calling some tribes to convert to Islam. Abū Bakr informed the Prophet about the origins

[10] Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981) 78-9

of many tribes and sub-tribes.[11] Although genealogy, as a discipline, was not yet fully functional, it was nonetheless vital to the legitimacy of the caliphal office. In fact, the Quraysh had occupied a high position as the ruling elite in Medina since the beginning of the Muslim community.[12] One statement made by Abū Bakr leads us to accept this idea, for later, on the day of his election, he said: "...yet the Arabs will not recognize the rule of anyone but this tribe of Quraysh. They are the most noble of the Arabs in lineage and abode."[13]

It was Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41/661-60/680), the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, who then continued to discover the value of tribal genealogy of the Quraysh for certain political purposes.[14] This can be seen in his quest for historical and genealogical information, among other things, in order to justify his caliphal legitimacy. (Regarding this fact, one cannot neglect the power-relation element). Muʿāwiya is to be acknowledged as the heir of the previous Arabic prophethood and leadership. His interest in the story of the past is preserved in the report which says that: "one brought the files which contained the biographies and history (*akhbār*) of the kings and the wars and military ruses." A slave recited these subjects to his master: "each night he thus studied a certain amount of historical and biographical information, of antiquarian and political material."[15] The reconstruction of the Quraysh, in this context, by returning to the historical and genealogical past, is shown in the relations of Muʿāwiya with ʿUbayd b. Shurya. Both were committed to defining the historical and political identity of the Quraysh.[16] Others involved in the process, particularly, in terms of discovering the discipline of genealogy at the time, were Miskīn b. ʿĀmir al-Dārimī (d. 41/661-60/680) and Daghfal

11 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest* 84.

12 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest* 75-82.

13 English version by W. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambrideg: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 30-31; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 218-223; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.) vol. 1, 55-56; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 327.

14 Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *al-Aghānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1390/1970) vol. 1, 7-8; M. R. E. Brünnow, et. al., *Tables Alphabétiques du Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Leiden: Brill, 1900) 633-634; N. Abbot, *Studies 1*, 14. It is said that Muʿāwiya always pursued his keen interest in the following three themes: *ashʿār* (poetry), *ansāb* (genealogy) and *akhbār* (history).

15 Trans. Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968) 50; al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or [Murūj al-Dahab]* (Paris: A L'imprimerie Impériale, 1869) vol. 5, 77; Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel (Beirut: Maktaba Khayyād, n.d.) 89.

16 Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Dār al-Kutub, 1348/1929) vol. 2, 305; See also Raif Georges Khoury, "Geschichte oder Fiktion. Zur erzählerischen Gattung der ältesten Bücher über Arabien" in Stefan Leder, ed., *Story-telling* 376; Abbot *Studies I*, 10-15; Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb/muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (Cairo: Maṭbaʿah Hindiyyah, 1913) vol. 5, 13.

b. Ḥanẓala (d. 50/670 or 65/684-85),[17] whose original enquiries, however, have not reached us in the form of a written record.[18]

Hishām b. Muḥammad (120/738-204/819),[19] whose authority was based on his father Muḥammad b. as-Sa'ib b. Bishr al-Kalbī (64/683-146/763), rediscovered the importance of this genealogy. The son recounts that his father had taught him the lineage of the family of the Prophet. This is due to the fact that the family of al-Kalbī belonged to the Shiʿite party, for which the nobility and sacredness of the Prophet's house played a vital role. The role of power in giving rise to this discipline is obvious, as may be seen in the case of Muʿāwiya. The expertise of the father, Muḥammad, and his work reached al-Manṣūr (r. 136/754-58/775). Caskel explains that "Das reiche Material über die Teilnehmer an der Revolution, in der zunächst für ein Mitglied der Familie des Propheten geworben wurde, um die Schiiten einzufangen, ginge dann auf ihn zurück."[20] The son of the expert, Hishām, came as a result to be known not merely as a transmitter but also as a discoverer of the discipline. He, likewise, could not escape the discursive trend of the intervention of the caliph in contributing to the birth of this knowledge. Like many scholars who attached themselves to the caliphs for professional reasons—such as in the case of Ibn Isḥāq and al-Manṣūr whos chose the former to teach his son, al-Mahdī (b. 127/745-d. 169/785)—Hishām enjoyed the same patronage from al-Mahdī.[21]

The making of the Quraysh, nonetheless, was part of the process of constructing genealogy, which served primarily as a tool of caliphal administration (*dīwān*), and theologically and politically legitimated the nobility of the bloodline of the ruling dynasty. Al-Mahdī's intervention in removing the family of Ziyād b. Abīh (b. 1-2/622-4- d. 53/673)[22] from the *diwān* of the Quraysh (*fi radd alī ziyād ʿilā nasabihim*), for instance, confirms this. Al-Mahdī's intervention explicitly acknowledged, as he opposed the previous genealogical legitimacy of the Umayyads. "It was the decision of Muʿāwiya b. Abi Sufyān to adopt Ziyād b. ʿUbayd, the slave of the family of ʿAllāj of Thāqif..."[23] The dispute between the Abbasid and Umayyad caliphs over legiti-

[17] *Fihrist* 89; al-Iṣbahānī, *al-Aghānī* vol. 1, 7-8; N. Abbot, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri 1, Historical Texts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) 14; *GAS* vol. 2, 323; vol. 9, 279.

[18] Caskel, *Ǧamharāt an-Nasab* 47. However, an example of *shiʿr* attributed to Miskīn; see Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* vol. 1, 39.

[19] *Fihrist* 95-98; *GAL* S. I, 331; Yāqūt, *Irshād* vol. 7, 250-254; Abbott, *Studies* I, 45.

[20] Caskel, *Ǧamharāt an-Nasab* 75.

[21] Caskel, *Ǧamharāt an-Nasab* 78.

[22] He served as a Governor of Muʿāwiya in Baṣra, Khurasan, Sijistan, Hind, Bahrain, and Oman; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 5, 217; trans. Micheal G. Morony, *The History* 78. Ref. cited.

[23] The reason behind this is said to have been that: "Muʿāwiya admired Ziyād for his determination and effectiveness and what he hoped from his assistance and his support to strengthen him in his resorting to the falsehood in his conduct, ways, and wicked works." Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol 8, 130-31; trans. Hugh Kennedy, *The History* 190-193. See also Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*

macy and authority of power, in this context, had much to do with the production of the genealogy of the Quraysh.

The Quraysh as "*qawm yaʿtadūn*"

Islamic historical literature presents a paradoxical image of the Quraysh. On the one hand, the tribe is regarded as highly qualified for leadership of the *umma* (Muslim community). On the other, the image of the tribe is in line with the description of Musaylima's letter as "*qawm yaʿtadūn*". A famous tradition reports that "*aʾimma min quraysh* (the leaders are from Quraysh),"[24] interpreted and later rationalized as meaning that the quality of the Quraysh leads to authority over and leadership of the *umma.*[25] The *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal posits a direct relation between *khalīfah*, *āmir* and Quraysh in a number of traditions. Among them: "*la yazal al-Islām ʿazīz ilā ithnā ashar khalīfa,....kulluhum min Quraysh* (Islam remains mighty under 12 caliphs....all are from Qurasyh)." Another tradition uses the word *amīr* instead of caliph.[26] Muslim employs the word "*al-amr*" instead of Islam, and in yet another version we find "*hādha al-dīn*". The word "*al-amr*" in the tradition is relevant to the message of the letter of Musaylima.[27] Muslim reports another, saying that "men follow the Quraysh righteously and wrongly (*al-Nās tabaʿ li quraysh fi al-khayr wa al-sharr*)."[28] Tirmidhī also reports that "whoever wants the weakness of the Quraysh, God weakens him."[29]

However, another tradition contains a contradictory message, which mentions that part of the Quraysh—the Banū Umayya—was among the three groups of living beings whom the Prophet hated. "The Prophet passed away and he detested the three living-beings (*aḥyāʾ*): the Thāqif, the Ḥanīfa, and the Umayya."[30] The negative image of the Quraysh was reinforced during the political career of the Umayyads. It was the rebel leader al-Mukhtār (revolted 66/685-67/687) who said: "by God, if I killed three-fourths of Quraysh in

vol 5, 222; trans. Morony, *The History* 82-3. It is reported that Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī also accused Muʿāwiya with the same content; see Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Max Schloessinger, rev. ann. M. J. Kister (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press, 1971) vol. 4a, 102; R. B. Serjeant, "Early Arabic Prose" 122, n. 18.

[24] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vol. 3, 129, 193 and vol. 4, 421.

[25] Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqqī (Cairo, 1371/1952) vol. 1, 26, 34, vol. 2, 21; al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa al-wilāyat al-dīniyya* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalibī, 1386/1966) 6-7; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958) vol. 1, 396-401; cf. Watt, "Kuraysh" in *IE*².

[26] Aḥmad, *Musnad*, vol. 5, 90, 95, 98. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *k. imāra* vol. 2, 802.

[27] "*La yazal hādha al-amr ʿazīzan ilā ithna ʿashar khalīfatan....kulluhum min qurayshin,*" see *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *k. imāra* vol. 2, 802.

[28] See *k. imāra* vol. 2, 801.

[29] Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan* 985.

[30] Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, *k. manāqib*" 992.

requital for Ḥusayn, they would not measure up to one of his fingernails!"[31] The negative image of the tribe increased after Muʿāwiya died. This accompanied the long conflict that lasted until the civil strife (*fitnah*) of Ibn al-Zubayr (68/683-73/693).[32]

The best example of the negative image of the Umayyads, as a representation of the Quraysh, is expressed in the words of a Kharijite rebel leader at the end of the Umayyad period, Abū Ḥamza al-Mukhtār b. ʿAwf (d. 130/748):

> These Banu Umayya are parties of waywardness. Their might is self-magnification. They arrest on suspicion, make decrees capriciously, kill in anger, and judge by passing over crimes without punishment. They take the alms tax from the incorrect source and make it over the wrong people.[33]

Abū Ḥamza provides a list of the sinful deeds committed by all the Umayyad caliphs. To begin with, "Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān, who had been cursed by the Messenger of God and was the son of one so cursed....His religion is a cause of corruption." Yazīd is described as "a sinner in respect of his belly and his private parts." Marwān (r. 64/684-65/685) and b. Marwān "shed forbidden blood and devoured forbidden property." ʿAbd al-Mālik (r. 65/685-86/705) "made Ḥajjāj an imam of his, leading to hellfire." On another occasion, al-Ṭabarī also describes how al-Ḥajjāj violated the Companions of the Prophet, such as Anas b. Mālik, Jābir b. ʿAbdalla,[34] and Sahl b. Saʿd,[35] by "forcing them to wear seals around their necks."[36] Al-Walīd (r. 86/705-96-7/715) "was a stupid fool, at a loss in [his] waywardness, abusing it (i.e. the caliphate) with benighted senseless." Sulaymān (r. 96-7/715-99/717) was only "concern[ed] with his belly and his private parts."

Al-Walīd II (r. 125/743-126/744) is also pictured elsewhere negatively. To illustrate, Yazīd III (r. 126/744), in a letter to the Iraq people, states that al-Walīd was "the enemy of God"; "the violator of sacred things"; that "blood was shed because of him"; "possessions were unlawfully seized"; and that he "had disobeyed God..."[37]

[31] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 61; trans. Fishbein, *The History* 38.

[32] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 128; trans. Fishbein, *The History* 135.

[33] Al-Azdī, *Tārīkh al-mawṣil* (Dār al-Taḥrīr, 1967) 104; *GAS* 1, 350, 104-105; Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph* 132. On Abū Ḥamza see T. Lewicki, "Le Ibadites dans l'Arabie du sud au moyen age" *Folia Orientalia* 1 (1959); J. van Ess, "Das Kitab al-Irja des Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya," *Arabica* 21 (1974) 41; Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 166.

[34] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 195; trans. Everett K. Rowson, *The History* 2. For more on the story that Anas was also forced to ask pardon to the caliph ʿAbd Mālik, see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 4, 385-87. See also Sezgin, *GAS* I, 85; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 9, 22.

[35] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325/1907) vol. 4, 252.

[36] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 195; trans. Rowson, *The History* 2.

[37] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 276; trans. Carole Hillenbrand, *The History*, 205. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph* 127. See also the accusation made against al-Wālīd's immoralities, Ṭabarī,

This image of the wickedness of the Umayyad caliphs is also given by al-Mahdī,[38] an image that his father, al-Manṣūr, also evokes in one of his letters.[39] Both caliphs, al-Mahdī and al-Manṣūr, had a close association with Ibn Isḥāq as the *ṣāḥib al-sīrah*; the father supported the writing of the *sīra*, while the son was Ibn Isḥāq's student.

Finally, all of the negative pictures of the Quraysh mentioned above were in accordance with the protest of Musaylima—whether genuine or an expression of opinion by Ibn Isḥāq attributed to another—against "*qawm yaʿtadūn.*"

The Heirs of Authority and Prophethood

Yā ayyuha al-ladhīna āmanū aṭīʿū Allāh wa aṭīʿū al-rasūl wa ūli al-amr minkum
O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the messenger and those
charged with authority among you
(Q. 4: 59).

Fa innī qad ushriktu fī-l-amr maʿak
Indeed, I have been made partner with you in authority
(Musaylima)

In the following assessment we will deal with the word "*amr*," contained in the letter of Musaylima, by attempting to relate the term to its usage in the Qurʾān, exegesis, *ḥadīth*, and the records of the early Islamic caliphate.

Looking at the two above quotations taken from the Qurʾān and the letter of Musaylima, we are led to ask what possible similarities, in terms of meaning, exist between the usage of the word in both texts. Do both just use the same word accidentally? Are the meanings of each in both texts different? Is it necessary to relate both texts? It should be noted, in this regard, that *amr* is abundantly used in both the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. One tradition, for instance, states: "*man aṭāʿa amīrī faqad aṭāʿanī* (those who obey my *āmir*, obey me [the Prophet])."[40] Al-Bukhārī transmits another tradition mentioning

Tārīkh vol. 7, 209, 231; trans. Hillenbrand, *The History* 88, 89; 92; 126; 127; 126; for more on the relationship between Hishām and Wālid see al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī* vol. 6, 102-03, 107; Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Maṭbaʿa al-Kathūlikiyya, 1400/1979) vol. 4, 363. It should also be born in mind that later Umayyad caliphs failed to restore their good image damaged by, for instance, the provocation of many Khārijite rebel leaders, who called upon Muslims to return to a more pious Islam. See Laura Veccia Vaglieri, "The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates" in eds. P.M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) vol. 1, 101-103.

38 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 131; trans. Hugh Kennedy, *The History* 192.

39 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 15; trans. Hugh Kennedy, *The History* 24-25.

40 See, for instance, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *k. Aḥkām*" 1, vol. 3, 1441; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* vol. 2, 244, 253, 270, 313. 342, 386, 416,467, 471, and 511.

that "*al-umarā*ʿ *min qurayshin* (the holders of the authority are Qurayshite)."[41] This corresponds to the content of the letter of Musaylima in that it echoes his proposal of partnership in authority with the Prophet Muḥammad, the Qurayshite.

Al-Ṭabarī in his *Jāmi*ʿ *al-bayān* presents three possible interpretations of the phrase *ulū al-amr*: 1) the phrase refers to *umārā*ʾ (sing. *amīr*,[42] authority in charge),[43] a word that originally referred to the Prophet's Companions, whom the Prophet sent as deputies to Syria, and whom the *umma* had to obey (according to al-Nasāʾī, this was the case with ʿAbdalla b. Khudhāfa b. Qays b. ʿĀdi);[44] 2) the phrase may also refer to *ahl al-fiqh wa al-*ʿ*ilm*,[45] which simply refers to ʿ*ulamā*ʾ/*fuqahā*ʾ (scholars/jurists). (Al-Ṭabarsī (b. 470/1077-d. 548/1154) is in favor of this meaning);[46] 3) it refers to the Prophet's prominent Companions[47]—e.g. Abū Bakr and ʿUmar—who hold caliphal authority after the death of the Prophet. Al-Zamakhshārī (b. 467/1075-d. 538/1144) agrees with this last meaning, specifying the authorities as belonging to *al-khulafā*ʾ *al-rāshidūn* (the guided caliphs).[48]

With regard to the latter meaning, the oldest material evidence that attests to this title is in the form of a coin which confirms Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān as *amīr al-mu*ʾ*minīn*.[49] However, Muslim literature shows that it was ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb who was called for the first time *amīr al-mu*ʾ*minīn* (a commander of believers). His predecessor, Abū Bakr, preferred the following title: "*khalīfat rasūl Allah*/the deputy of the Messenger of God."[50] Afterwards, all Umayyad

[41] Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *k. al-Aḥkām*, vol. 3, 1441; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *k. Imāra* vol. 2, 801-802.

[42] Ibn Manẓūr, "amr" in *Lisān*. The word ʿ*umara* also refers to *al-mālik* (the king).

[43] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi*ʿ *al-bayān* ʿ*an ta*ʾ*wīl al-qur*ʾ*ān* ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) vol. 8, 497.

[44] In *k. Bay*ʿ*a* 27, (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) vol. 2, 692.

[45] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi*ʿ vol. 8, 499. According to Ibn Kathīr, Muslims must obey two authorities: that of the caliphs—even if the caliph is only a 'black slave'—and that of ʿ*ulamā*, as long as those who bear these authorities do not commit sinful deeds (*ma*ʿ*ṣiyya*). See Al-Ṣabūnī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr ibn Kathīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Qurʾān al-Karīm, nd.) vol. 1, 406-8.

[46] Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma*ʿ *al-bayān fi Tafsīr al-qur*ʾ*ān* (Qum: Manshūrāt Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1403H/1985) vol. 2, 64.

[47] Ṭabarī, *Jāmi*ʿ vol. 8, 501.

[48] Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf* ʿ*an-ḥaqā*ʾ*iq al-ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa* ʿ*uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta*ʾ*wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d.) vol. 1, 524.

[49] Jeremy Johns, "Archeology and the History of Early Islam: the First Seventy Years" *JESHO* 46 (2003) 418-419; John Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1941) vol. 1, 25-26; Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin. *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period. Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean 1*. (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002) 15 plates 17. 245-6, 18. 269; Clive Foss, "A Syrian Coinage of Muʿawiya?" *RN* 158 (2002) 360 n. 28.

[50] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 4, 208-9. Crone and Hinds, however, argue that the title "caliph of God" was adopted early caliphs, e.g. ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, Umayyad, and Abbasid caliphs. However, both scholars cast doubt on the story of Abū Bakr—as both a historical person and his office. See their *God's caliph* elsewhere, especially pp. 111-115.

and Abbasid caliphs followed the example of ʿUmar. Additionally, al-Ḥajjāj and other higher officials were also entitled to styly themselves as *amīr*[51]—whose root is the same as the word *amr*. One thing however is obvious: that numerous caliphs—from ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb to al-Manṣūr—continued to use *amīr al-muʾminīn* to refer to their authority.

It is clear that the word *amr*, during the time when Musaylima sent the letter to Muḥammad, had no direct association with the caliphal office, which had not yet been founded.[52] The word, therefore, only came to be associated with the office and the administration of the caliphs in the later development. The institution and the *khalīfa* and *amīr al-muʾminīn* themselves continued to evolve along with the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates.

Nonetheless, reading the letter of Musaylima, it can be seen that *nubuwwa* and *amr* are mentioned simultaneously—a fact which may imply that the meanings of both were associated in the minds of both Musaylima and Ibn Isḥāq. At the time of Musaylima, on the one hand, the Quraysh held these *amr* and *nubuwwa*. At the time of Ibn Isḥāq, on the one hand, the caliphs, serving as the commanders of the believers (*amīr al-muʾminīn*), still held *amr* and guarded *nubuwwa* (see also chapter four below).

Comparing the letter of Musaylima to Qurʾānic verse 4: 59, both agree on the complicated border between the two holders of authority, namely between the messenger and the *ulū al-amr*. Indeed, the absence of any mention of God in the letter, in contrast to His presence in the Scripture, further points up the difference between the two texts. However, it does make clear the fact that the authority of God had been already deputed to both His messenger and *ulū al-amr*. For al-Ṭabārī and other Muslim exegetes, the authority of the messenger was undisputable. However, the identity of the *ulū al-amr* was not made clear. Musaylima's letter, by contrast, goes beyond this, by questioning the authority of the messenger (which can be divided).

In sum, not only does the content of the letter of Musaylima dispute the authority of Muḥammad as the Prophet and the head of the Medinan community, it also does so those of the caliphs. Particularly, when Ibn Isḥāq read it to his audience, he seems to have kept in mind that the Quraysh as *qawm yaʿtadūn* refers to the Umayyads.

[51] For example, a saying reads as follows: "*amara ʿalaynā al-ḥajjāj* (al-Ḥajjāj rules us)"; see Ibn Manẓūr, "amr" in *Lisān*. The label *amīr*, referring to an administrative position, can be found in the system of administration of the Umayyad dynasty. *Amīrs*, appointed by caliphs, usually bore the responsibility for the task of security, administration, and taxation for certain region. It is said that the people of Quraysh and Thāqif dominated this position; see G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam, The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987)35-6.

[52] See D. Sourdel, "Khalīfa," W. Madelung, "Imāma," and A. A. Duri, "Amīr" in *EI*². For more meanings of the term *khalīfa* in the early Qurʾānic exegesis; see, for instance, Wadād al-Qāḍī, "The Term "Khalifa" in Early Exegetical Literature" in ed. Adrew Rippin, *The Qurʾān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) 327-346.

Under the Shadow of the Caliph's Project

The second Abbasid caliph—al-Manṣūr (r. 136/754-158/775)—had just built a new capital city—Baghdad—and consolidated the new dynasty. In this regard, establishing a more confident authority was crucial in strengthening his role as Abbasid *amīr al-muʾminīn*. In the field of literature, he entrusted the task of consolidation to Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767), the *ṣāhib al-sīra*.[53]

The caliph gave his full support to Ibn Isḥāq[54] to start the ambitious project of writing the 'sacred' history of mankind, which includes *kitāb mubtadaʾ* (genesis), *kitāb mabʿath* (prophecy office), *maghāzī* (conquest), and *tārīkh khulafāʾ* (contemporary power). This project aimed at situating the prophethood of Muḥammad within the history of the universe, taking into account both the time before it and the time that followed, especially from the perspective of the time of the writer and the ruler (that of Ibn Isḥāq and al-Manṣūr). This, in short, involved the rebirth and reclaiming of this epistemological prophethood. The task was carried out by: 1) collecting materials inside and outside the Islamic traditions; 2) accommodating all traditions of prophecy in the cultures and traditions surrounding the writer that might function as a bridge to understanding the prophecy of Muḥammad;[55] and 3) connecting the authority of the prophecies to the current power, namely that of the caliph.

The impact of this project has endured for generations. To illustrate, early and later Muslim scholars have boldly redefined *rasūl* (messenger) and *nabī* (prophet) far beyond what the content of the Qurʾān and Ḥijāzī tradition entail. The Scripture itself tells us only 25 names of *nabī*s and *rasūl*s

[53] See Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar al-aʿlām al-nubulā* ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnūd and ʿAlī Abū Zayd (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1405/1985) vol. 7, 48; Yāqūt, *Irshād* vol. 6, 399; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwat ʿUkāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1960) 491-492; cf. Schoeler, *Charakter* 43.

[54] Many have studied about Ibn Isḥāq; see, for instance, T. Khālidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 34-9. Abbott, *Studies* I, 45, 87, 89; Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurʾān and Muslim Literature* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002) 129; W. M. Watt, "The Materials Used by Ibn Isḥāq," in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) 23-34; R. Sellheim, "Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte. Die Muhammed-Biographie des Ibn Isḥāq," *Oriens* 18-19 (1966) 33-91; J. Fück, "Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq. Literaturhistorische Untersuchungen." Diss. Frankfurt. a. M. 1925; W. Raven "*Sīra*" in *EI*² and *EQ*. Ref. cited.

[55] Prior to Ibn Isḥāq, many—such as Wahb. b. Munabbih (d. 730), Isḥāq b. Bishr (d. 821), or Wathīma b. Mūsā (d. 850)—had used extra-Islamic sources in explaining The Prophethood of Muḥammad. In the field of exegesis, ʿAbdalla b. Abbās (d. 65/686) and Kaʿb b. al-Akhbār (d. 32/652) did so. In the *quṣaṣ* tradition, Tamīm al-Dārī (d. 660) committed the same deeds. See, for instance, R. Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets* 138-146; William M. Brinner in his introduction of *ʿArāis al-Majālis* xviii-xix; R. G. Khoury, *Les légends prophétiques dans l'Islam depuis le Iᵉʳ jusqu'au IIIᵉ siecle de l'Hégire* (Weisbaden: Otto Horrassowitz, 1978); Khalil Athamina, "al-Qaṣaṣ: its Emergence, Religious Origin and its Socio-political Impact on Early Muslim Society" *SI*, 55 (1993): 53-74. See also Al Makin, "Modern Exegesis on Historical Narratives of the Qurʾān: The Case of ʿĀd and Thamūd according to Sayyid Quṭb in his *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qurʾān*" MA. Thesis, McGill university 1999, chapter one.

from Adam to Muḥammad,[56] whereas Muslim scholars such as al-Kisāʾī and al-Thaʿlabī provide much more detailed stories of each prophet and embellish them in a much more complete fashion.[57] The quantity of the stories of the prophets and messengers grew at an incredible rate over the course of the development of Muslim literature. Equally notable is that most of the materials from which these authors drew are non-Qurʾānic.

Indeed, the prophetic *logia*, were to borrow Wansbrough's term, flourished at this moment. From that time onwards, numerous genres of Muslim literature have shaped and reshaped the 'sacred history,' including the reenactment of Muḥammad's lifetime (*sīra*), which served as a nostalgic or romantic impulse for the narrators in their stories about the past of Ḥijāz. Interestingly, in justifying the prophethood of Muḥammad, these scholars also blended many traditions—Judeo-Christian, biblical, Persian, Greek, and other non-Arabic/*aʿjam* elements.[58] As a result, the ones holding to these traditions were expected to admit the prophethood of Muḥammad, which had, in turn, been deputed to and inherited by the caliphs. It seems that there was no other choice for those belonging to non-Islamic traditions than to accept the legitimacy of the caliphs. Thus, the injection of extra-Islamic materials into the account of the prophethood of Muḥammad also implies another kind of power-relation.[59] This involved emphasizing the legitimacy of the new dynasty of the Abbasids as that of *amīr al-muʾminīn*. The current authority was to be seen as the true and legitimate heir of earlier prophecies and of Muḥammad, a notion that was to be acknowledged among the *umma*, subjects of the caliphs.

[56] The number of *nabīs*, according to Muslim literature, reached as many as 124 000 people, whereas *rasūls* consist of 315 people. See, for example, William M. Brinner in his introduction, *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fi Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ or Live of The Prophet* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) xvi-xvii. Two articles dealing with prophethood in Islam are worth mentioning here: Willem A. Bijlefeld, "A Prophet and more than a Prophet" *WM* 59 (January 1969) 1-28; A. J. Wensinck, "Muḥammad und die Propheten," *Acta Orientalia*, 2 (1924) 168-198.

[57] This tendency can be seen in later *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* literature; see, for instance, al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ al-ʿAnbiyā*, ed. I. Eisenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1922-3), trans. W. M. Thackson Jr. as *The Tales of The Prophet of al-Kisāʾī* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978); Heribert Busse as *Islamische Erzählungen von Propheten und Gottesmännern: qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 2006); al-Thaʿlābi, *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā al-Musammā ʿArāʾis al-Majālis* (Cairo: 1954).

[58] For more on the elements of the extra-Islamic traditions preserved in the *sīra*; see, for example, Ahmed Irhayem Hebbo, "Die Fremwörter in der arabischen Prophetenbiographie des Ibn Hischam," diss. University Heidelberg, 1970.

[59] See J. D. McAuliffe, "Assessing the *Israʾīliyyāt*: An Exegetical Conundrum," in *Story-telling* 363. McAuliffe concludes that "the taking of the story of Jewish and Christian accounts should only be mention for purposes of attestation, not as basis belief" (p. 362). Moreover, in observing the same tendency, Jacob Lassner states that "a more confident hegemonic Muslim society sought to legitimize its prophet and faith a final, indeed the quintessential link in the long history of monotheism, an agenda that occasioned much curiosity about the ancient Israelites and their themes." See Jacob Lassner, *Demonizing the Queens of Sheba, Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbibilical Judaism and Medieval islam* (Chicago: The Unviersity of Chicago Press, 1993) 133. See also *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muḥammad* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989) 1.

The relation of the *umma* to the caliphs—a relationship that was somewhat worldly—was, in turn, supposed to be like that of an *umma* to its Prophets—a relationship that was more sacred.

In closing, a question is worth asking here: Why were early and later Muslim scholars not interested in retelling the story of Musaylima? As we saw above, these caliphs, from Muʿāwiya to al-Manṣūr, had a keen interest in discovering the past. They were eager to unearth the stories of the victors—such as kings, prophets, leaders, and saints—who served as models for them and as a form of legitimacy for their caliphal office. However, they had no interest whatsoever in elaborating the defeated, including Musaylima. As is well known, the many early scholars to whom the caliphs gave their patronage successfully fashioned new disciplines, ranging from genealogy, poetry and biography to historiography. The caliphs, in turn, collaborated with these scholars in order to legitimate their caliphal office. However, none of these were concerned with the reenactment of Musaylima's story—a project that would have been of no benefit to them. Defeated characters could not be used as archetypes, unless as archetypes of the enemy. It is also clear that the reenactment of the story of Musaylima would have not increased their legitimacy. In fact, there were certain dangers in recalling Musaylima.

As such, the story of Musaylima remained an obscure one. There was no expansive tendency in terms of either the text or the *isnād* of his letter; the most complete text that we have so far analyzed is still that belonging to the originator, Ibn Isḥāq, whereas the texts presented by later Muslim writers feature many defects. It stands to reason therefore to argue that the story of Musaylima was diminished. By contrast, there is an expansive tendency in a number of stories lending support to the project of prophetic *logia* and sacred history, ranging from those of the prophets to those of kings.

Nevertheless, in reading the text of the letter, the words and the phrases contained in it were operative, from the time of Musaylima to that of Ibn Isḥāq. The words Quraysh, authority, and prophethood still played a critical role in scholarly debate and political rivalry[60] during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. Take the phrase "*qawm yaʿtadūn*" as an illustration; this phrase bears a certain symbolical meaning for both Musaylima and Ibn Isḥāq. Certain interchanging roles between the two can be detected here. On the one hand, the phrase seems to protest the expansion of Medina to the neighboring tribes through the many campaigns that the Prophet Muḥammad had waged. Musaylima, as another prophet and a tribal leader in Yamāma, felt threatened by these campaigns. His reference to Quraysh as "*qawm yaʿtadūn*" seems to express this. On the other hand, Ibn Isḥāq appears to use Musaylima to discredit the Umayyads—a practice not uncommon among proponents of

[60] For more discussion on the dynamic relation of the four themes, *umma, khilāfa, nubuwwa, amr* in Early Muslim literature; see, for instance, F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998).

the Abbasids. Indeed, Ibn Isḥāq held a position in the intellectual think-tank of the caliph al-Manṣūr, who entrusted him later to educate his successor, al-Mahdī. In this regard, the letter contains relevant and timely concepts, i.e. it is not a 'dead' text. The image of the Quraysh—its prophethood and authority—were still in the making at the time of Ibn Isḥāq.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESPONSES TO THE LETTER

The rules of communication:
Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in the discourse;
a) Everyone is allowed to question any ascertain whatsoever;
b) Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatsoever into the discourse;
c) Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs;
No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2) above.
(J. Habermas)[1]

Muḥammad's answer to Musaylima is paradigmatic in content with repetition of *Basmalla*, *Salām*, and a quotation of the Qur'ān. Interestingly, the answer also reflects the way in which later caliphs rejected Musaylima's prophethood and those of other claimants. The discussion in this chapter then deals essentially with the notion of the seal of prophethood (*khātam al-nubuwwa*), according to which claims after Muḥammad must be rejected. This chapter also describes the task of the caliphs as the heirs of prophethood and authority, who guarded the *khātam* doctrine.

[1] See his *Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zur Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt am Main: Surkamp Verlag, 1984) 202; *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry W. Nicholson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990 [1983]) 89; James G. Finlayson, *Habermas, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 43; Andrew Edgar, *The Philosophy of Habermas* (Bucks: Acumen, 2005) 158.

The Answer

Various Muslim authors agree that the text of Muḥammad's answer to Musaylima reads as follows:

Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm.
Min muḥammad rasūl allāh ilā musaylima al-kadhdhāb:
Al-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿ al-hudā. ʿAmmā baʿd
Fa inna al-arḍ yurithuhā man yashāʾ min ʿibādih, wa-l-ʿāqibat li-l-muttaqīn.[2]

In the name of God the most merciful the most compassionate.
From Muḥammad the messenger of God to Musaylima the arch liar. Hereafter,
Peace be upon those who follows the guidance.
The earth belongs to God. He lets whom He will of His creatures inherit it and the result is to the pious.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (691/1292-d. 751/1350), however, leaves out the phrase *ʿamm baʿd.*[3] In addition, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. early 5th/11th century) does not retain the opening expression of the *basmalla.*[4] Al-Yaʿqūbī's (early 3th/9th- 292/905) text is also defective, lacking the greeting *al-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿa al-hudā.*[5] However, the remainder of their texts are in principle faithful to that of Ibn Hishām.

[2] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 601; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad* 649; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) 3, 146; trans. Ismail K. Poonawala, *The last Years of The Prophet: the Formation of the State* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1988) 107; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) 5, 51; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa Wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *al-Maghāzī*, 686; Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-mūḍī*, ed. Sharf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudīr (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 2, 347; Alāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *Tafsīr al-khāzin* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, n.d.) vol. 2, 53. On the margin, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd al-Farrā al-Baghāwī, *Tafsir al-Baghāwī/Maʿālim al-tanzīl* vol. 2, 53-54; Al-Maqrīzī, *ʿImtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li-l-nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafada wa-l-matāʿ* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Numaysī and Muḥammad Jāmil Ghāzī (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1981) vol. 1, 366; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 148; al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīra al-amīn al-maʾmūn/Sīra al- ḥalabīyya* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, n.d.) vol. 3, 256; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Afandī al-Naʿsānī (Cairo: Al-Saʿāda, 1325/1906) vol. 1, 23; al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā wa-l-rashād fī sīra khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Tarzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUzbawī (Cairo: Wizāra Awkāf, Lajna Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 6, 495; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 300; cf. For the reference on the sources, see Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa al-wathāʾiq al-siyāsiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 1985) 305.

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-maʿād fī hady khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Miṣriyya, 1347/1928) vol. 3, 31-32.

[4] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ wa muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarāʾ wa-l-bulughāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktaba al-Ḥayyāh, 1961) vol. 4, 431.

[5] Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964) vol. 2, 120.

Al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), on the other hand, gives the most divergent reading in two respects. He uses the word *nabī* instead of *rasūl* and places the greeting at the end. Thus, the text reads:

> *Bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*
> *min muḥammad al-nabī ilā musaylima al-kadhdhāb:*
> *ʿAmmā baʿd.*
> *Inna al-arḍ yūrithuhā man yashā' min ʿibādih, wa-l-ʿāqibat li-l-muttaqīn.*
> *Al-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿa al-hudā.*[6]

Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/784) offers a distinctive prelude, which reads:

> *Balaghanī kitābuka al-kidhb wa-l-iftirā' ʿalā allāh*
> (Your letter has reached me, liar and traitor against God)
>
> *Wa inna al-arḍ yūrithuhā man yashā' min ʿibādih, wa-l-ʿāqibat li-l-muttaqīn.*
> *Wa-l-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿa al-hudā.*[7]

Comparing the text of the answer from Muḥammad to that of the letter of Musaylima, one can perhaps conclude that Muslim scholars were concerned to present the former more accurately than the latter. It is obvious that the various versions of the answer from Muḥammad contain only slight discrepancies. So far, we have only three variants: those of Ibn Hishām, al-Balādhurī, and Ibn Saʿd.

In terms of the frequency in usage of the texts, those of al-Balādhurī and Ibn Saʿd were not quoted by later scholars, whereas that of Ibn Hishām serves as the standard text. And just as all redactions of the letter of Musaylima share the same content in at least one respect —proposing to share the land and the authority—all redactions of the reply utter the exact same Qur'ānic citation (Q. 7: 128).

Treating the reports of the letter and the reply as a unity, the chronological order of the story seems simple; that is, after Musaylima had sent the letter, Muḥammad answered him. Another consequence is that the *isnād* of the reply is just the same as that of the letter, ending with Ibn Isḥāq as the common link.

In the case of the story of Musaylima's letter we have supporting reports, extending back to the authority of Ibn Masʿūd (see chapter two earlier). Nevertheless, these reports only mention the reaction of the Prophet towards the two emissaries of Musaylima, and contain no hint of the existence of an official reply. Not similar reports exist for the latter, leaving us to address the nature of a manuscript of Muḥammad's answer preserved in Istanbul.[8]

[6] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 106.

[7] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960) vol. 1, 273.

[8] R. B. Serjeant, "Early Arabic Prose" in *Arabic Literature to the End of The Umayyad Period*, eds. A.F. L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni-

Authenticity

The authenticity of the Prophet's letters sent to various rulers inside and outside Arabia has long been the subject of debate.[9] Goldziher, Caetani, Buhl, Nöldeke, Schwally and Serjeant tend to doubt their authenticity; in fact, the manuscripts of the letters found a century ago have so far failed to convince most Western scholars. On the other hand, modern Muslim scholars, such as Ḥamīdullah, have studied them and argued in favor of their authenticity.[10] The authenticity of Prophet's letters to Muqawqis,[11] Heraclius,[12] al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Kulāl,[13] the Negus of Abyssinia[14] are doubtful. The Prophet's letter to Kisra seems to bear more possibilities of authenticity.[15]

versity Press, 1983) 141. See, Hilmi Aydin, *The Sacred Trusts: Pavilion of the Sacred Relics; Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul*, eds. Talha Uğurluel and Ahmet Doğru (New Jersey: Light, 2004) 99.

9 R. B. Serjeant, "Early Arabic Prose" 139-142. Ref. cited.

10 M. Hamidullah, *Six originaux des Lettres du Prophète de L'islam: étude paléographique et historique des lettres du Prophète* (Paris: Tougui, 1985).

11 M. Belin, "Sur un document arabe relatif à Mahomet" *JA* (1854): 482-518. See also Ḥamīdullah, "Some Arabic inscriptions of Medinah of the Early Years of Hijrah," *IS*, 13 (1939) 429; idem, *Majmūʿa* 138.

For more discussion on the identity of Muqawqis, see, for instance, A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last thirty Years of Roman Dominion*, ed. P. M. Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) 508-526; Ḥamīdullah, *Documents sur la diplomatie Musulmane à l'époque du prophète et khalifes orthodoxies* (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve, 1935) 63-69; idem, *Le Prophète de l'Islam* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1959) 209.

However, Öhrenberg (*EI²*) and Hoyland are quite doubtful regarding the relation of Muḥammad to Muqawqis. See Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1997) 579, 639. See also Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961) vol. 1, 190 n. 3.

12 Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 107-110; idem "La Lettre du Prophète à Héraclius et le sort de l'original," *Arabica* 2 (1955): 97-110; idem, *Le Prophète de l'Islam* 554-587; idem, "Une ambassade du calife Abu Bakr aupres de l'empereur, et le livre byzantin de la prediction de destinees," *FO* 2 (1960) 29-42; Suhaylah al-Jabburi "The Prophet's Letter to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius" *HI* I no. 3 (1978): 15-49.

Buhl, however, sees that the letter is as devoid of any historical value. See his *Das Leben Muhammeds* (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1955) 45. Additionally, Serjeant reminds us about the fictitious setting of the arrival of The Prophet's emissary to Byzantine court. See his "Early Arabic Prose" 142.

13 Cohen says: "Faut-il comprendre qu'il s'agit de la date de la copie et que l'auteur, selon l'habitude de certains scribes, a écrit 12 pour 1012? La disposition de la date dans le document serait difficile à expliquer." See his "Un manuscript en caractéres sudarabiques d'une letter de Muḥammad" *Comptes rendus, Groupe linguistique d'études chamito-sémitiques*, 15 (1970-1). See also Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 109-225; idem, "A letter of The Prophet in the Musnad-script" *HI* 5/3 (1982): 3-20.

14 See D. M. Dunlop, "Another 'Prophetic' Letter" *JRAS* (1940): 54-60; Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 99-102.

15 R. B. Serjeant, "Early Arabic Prose" 141. Generally speaking, Serjeant considers the reign of the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99/717-101/720) as the time when most of The Prophet's letters were forged. This caliph had himself entered into correspondence

As regards the Prophet's reply to Musaylima, it can be read closely without reference to authenticity but as an expression of a concept either contemporary to or later than Muhammad's lifetime.

Composition of the Answer

The above text of the Prophet's answer is composed of three paradigmatic expressions: 1) *Basmalla*; 2) *Salām* (greeting); and 3) a quotation of the verse of the Qur'ān. The opening phrase of the above text is the *Basmalla*, a crucial element of Muslim religiosity from the start.[16] Al-Ṭabarī provides a lengthy interpretation on the theme of the *Basmalla* in the opening *sūra* of the Scripture, *al-Fātiḥa*. He analyzes carefully the meaning of every word and phrase contained in the utterance. We are told that the *Basmalla* was among the first revelations that came to the Prophet.[17]

The earliest document apart from the Qur'ān that uses the *Basmalla* is—according to our present knowledge—the constitution of Medina, attributed to the Prophet himself. The document opens with the expression.[18] In addition, all the aforementioned letters of the Prophet likewise begin with it.

Various material evidence also proves that the use of the *Basmalla* was common from the first years of early Muslim society. The most ancient monument found so far is a tombstone of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khayr al-Hajrī in Egypt. The monument itself bears the date of his death, the year 31/652 (the

with the princes of Transoxania, calling the latter to Islam. As Serjeant sees it, forgeries may have been produced in order to justify the caliph's act. At the time Muslims were engaged in polemics against Christians, in particular the ones against Byzantine ruler Leo II and John of Damascus (who left the Umayyad service in 102/720). However, this conclusion is still speculative. It seems that the manuscripts of the letters use different materials, scripts, and consequently may be dated differently. It is also plausible that the manuscripts in our possession are only copies of earlier, even authentic ones. In sum, echoing Serjeant's words, "a critical study of these documents still remains far from complete." See Serjeant, "Early Arabic Prose" 140.

16 See, for instance, William A. Graham, "Basmalla" in *EQ*. The Qur'ān uses the exact expression twice, in Q. 1: 1 and 30: 28. A rather similar expression is also found in Q. 41: 11 (*bismallāh majrīhā wa mursāhā*).

17 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl al-qurʾān*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) vol. 1, 114-134. Abundant references are also found in the collections of traditions (the *ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, the *Sunans* of al-Nasāʾī, Dārimī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Maja, the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik and others), especially at the start of their various chapter headings (*jihād, adab, shurūṭ, tafsīr, iftitāḥ, ṣalāḥ, bayʿa, zakāt, waṣāyā*) and in many other places. See Wensinck, *Concordance* vol. 2, 550.

18 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, vol 1, 501-502; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 231; Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 59. Many have addressed this issue, concerning the authenticity of the document and its possible implication of the construction of the *sīra* of Muḥammad; see U. Rubin, "The Constitution of Medina: some Notes," *SI* 62 (1985) 5-23; R. B. Serjeant, "The *Sunnah Jamīʿah*, Pacts with the Yathrib Jews and the *Taḥrīm* of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the Documents Comprised in the so-called 'Constitution of Medina'" *BSOAS*, 41 (1978) 1-42.

reign of ʿUthmān). The engraved phrase reads: *Bi ism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm hādha al-qubr li ʿabd al-raḥmān b. khayr* (this tomb belongs to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Khayr).[19] A manuscript dated 22 H/December 642 and found in Egypt also contains the *Basmalla*.[20] Another quotation of the *Basmalla* is also seen in the graffito near Karbala Iraq, dated 64/683-84.[21]

The most obvious witness of the use of *Basmalla* in this early period is its presence on the Dome of the Rock in Bayt al-Maqdis, Jerusalem.[22] The *Basmalla* was also engraved on numerous coins. Clive Foss cites an Arab-Sassanian dirham with the image of Khusraw II. The expression was stamped on the coin and is dated as early as the year 20 H.[23] Another Arab-Sassanian coin dated to the year 35 bears the same invocation.[24] The following coins also use *Basmalla*: Arab-Sassanian coins of the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿAmīr (66/685-86)[25]; two Arab-Sassanian coins of the governor ʿAbd al-Mālik b. ʿAbdalla, Binshapur, dated 66 and 67[26]; a coin attributed to Khālid b. ʿAbdalla (71/690-91)[27]; and Arab-Sassanian coinage of the Marwanid Bishr b. Marwān, struck in Kūfa/Aqūla and in Baṣra (73-75).[28] There are common uses of the *Basmalla* in the later coins issued by both the Umayyads and the Abbasid rulers.[29]

19 Hassan Mohammed el-Hawary, "The most Ancient Islamic Monument Known Dated AH 31 (AD 652)" *JRAS* (1930) 322; Jeremy Johns, "Archeology and the History of Early Islam: the First Seventy Years" *JESHO* 46 (2003) 417.

20 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 688.

21 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 693; Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie* (Wien: Österreische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1967-71) vol. 2, 80.

22 El-Harawy, "The Most Ancient Islamic" 328; Sheila Blair "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" in *Bayt al-Maqdis ʿAbd al-Mālik's Jerusalem*, part. 1, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 72. The expression occurs in the epigraphy on the outer octagonal arcade five times (72/692) and once more on the inner octagonal arcade. See Saīd Nusaeibeh and Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996) 78-81. See also, Christel Kessler "ʿAbd al-Mālik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: A Reconsideration" *JRAS* (1970) 8; Blair "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" 86.

23 Clive Foss, "A Syrian Coinage of Muʿawiya?" *RN* 158 (2002) 365. See also, Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 689.

24 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 691; John Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1941) vol. 1, 13-23, 36-37, 40-46, 55, 65; Heinz Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik* (Braunschweig: Kinkhardt and Biermann, 1973) 22-24.

25 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 694; Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, vol. 1, 96-97.

26 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* 694; Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik* 62; Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, vol. 1, 97; Luke Treadwell, "The Orans' Drachms of Bishr b. Marwān and the Figural Coinage of the Early Marwānid Period," in *Bayt al-Maqdis. Jerusalem and Early Islam, Oxford studies in Islamic art ix part two*, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 243.

27 Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins* vol. 1, 112-13; Luke Treadwell, "The Orans' Drachms" 231. Khālid b. ʿAbdallāh is also governor of Baṣra in 73-75.

28 Treadwell, "The Orans' Drachms" 231-232.

29 See for instance, Paul Balog, *Umayyad, Abbasid and Tulunid, Glass weights and Vessel Stamps* (New York: The American Numismatic Society, 1976).

On the one hand, the use of the *Basmalla* was common and even paradigmatic. The expression has been repeatedly restated in various places, times and contexts down to today as an indicator of Muslim religiosity. The reply of the Prophet to Musaylima's letter follows the same practice. In the end we must pose the question: Was the *Basmalla* in the reply of the Prophet merely added? One thing is clear, i.e., that the *Basmalla*'s authenticity goes beyond the answer of the Prophet. If Ibn Isḥāq just interpolated it, he did not invent it out of nowhere, as its history extends back to the revelation itself.

On the other hand, the phrase *Basmalla*, which was found in the Qur'ān and Islamic practices, was also used by Musaylima, whose nickname was Raḥmān al-Yamāma, and whose God was called al-Raḥmān. Al-Ṭabarī discusses the relationship between *Basmalla* and Musaylima in his *tafsīr*.[30] Interestingly, Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, another claimant of prophethood, had also uttered this formula prior to Muḥammad (See chapter eight below).

The second component of the text of Muhammad's answer is the greeting which reads: "*Al-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿ al-hudā.*" It seems that the greeting in the above text shares a similar history to that of the *Basmalla*. It was a paradigmatic style of address in early Muslim literature. The same greeting was also used in the supposed letters of the Prophet addressed to the Negus, Heraclius, Muqawqis, Kisra, Jaʿfar and ʿAbd b. al-Julandī (leaders of Oman),[31] and Hawdha b. ʿAli (Yamāma's leader prior to Musaylima).[32] In addition, the Prophet's letter to al-Mundhir employed *salām ʿalayk*, whereas that addressed to Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Kulāl used the more complete greeting, *al-salam ʿalaykum wa rahmat allāh wa barakātuh*.

In addition, the greeting in the Prophet's reply to Musaylima is a direct quotation of Q. 20: 47. This is perhaps part of the enigma, for which U. Rubin has sought a solution. According to his theory, the process of Qur'ānization was the second phase of the development of the story in the *sīra*, which he sees as consisting of three phases. The first was originally a non-Qur'ānic, crude narration. The second was a stage of Qur'ānization.[33]

30 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* vol. 1, 130.

31 Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 161.

32 Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa* 156.

33 See U. Rubin, *The Eye of Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims* (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995). See a review by W. Raven, "The Biography of The Prophet and Its Scriptural Basis" in *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrasovitz, 1998) 428. Raven writes: "Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not, but for every time it does we owe him gratitude." Raven is right in that the final stage of the development, as proposed by Rubin, is not apparent. Works on *asbāb al-nuzūl* do not contain any explanation whatsoever of the account of either Musaylima's letter or the answer from The Prophet. See al-Wāḥidī al-Nīsābūrī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thaqāfiyya, n.d.) 174-175; al-Suyūṭī (d. 911H.), *Lubāb al-nuqūl fī asbāb al-nuzūl*, ed. Ḥamza al-Nashrī, ʿAbd al-Ḥāfid Farghālī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāmid Muṣṭafā (Cairo: Maktaba al-Qayyimah, n.d.) 291-293.

Interestingly enough, in Musaylima's letter—discussed at length in chapter two earlier—the prophet from Yamāma also used this kind of greeting, but a short version: *salām ʿalayk*. All in all, the two prophets—Musaylima and Muḥammad—greeted each other with their own version of *salām*.

The main content of the reply of Muḥammad to Musaylima reads *Fa inna al-arḍ yūrithuhā man yashāʾ min ʿibādih wa-l-ʿāqibat li-l-muttaqīn* (Q. 7: 128). Consulting early exegesis, such as the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī, one fails to discover any obvious connection between interpretation of the verse and the response of Muḥammad to Musaylima. Exegetes, in commenting on Q. 7: 128, refer most often to the story of Moses and his followers opposing the tyranny of Pharaoh.[34]

Due to its paradigmatic style and the clear citation of the Qurʾān, we may ask the following questions: Was the letter composed by those who were familiar with the Qurʾānic verses? And if it was merely forged, who did so and what motivation was behind it?

Instead of seeking the answers to the above questions directly, we may speculate that Q. 7: 128 may have had a certain connection to Musaylima, but it is hard to guess to what extent and in what context. What is clear is that the correspondence between Muḥammad and Musaylima served as an illustration of the verse in less formal commentary. However, later Qurʾānic exegetes chose to ignore it in an effort to distance the revelation of the Qurʾān from Musaylima. This tendency, whereby later scholars buried the figure of Musaylima in *tafsīr* literature, will also be dealt with in chapter eight below.

Juxtaposing the message and the answer

The following table is a schematic juxtaposition of the message and the response:

Thus, there is no direct link between the story of the letters and Qurʾānic exegesis. Nor did the *sīra* serve as a crude exegesis. Each genre of literature should thus be treated independently. In addition, this tendency appears to be absent from works of *tafsīr*. See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan-ḥaqāʾiq al-ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa ʿuyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-taʾwīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d.) vol. 3, 67; Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-taʾwīl*, ed. H. O. Fleischer (Leipzig: F.C.H. Vogel, 1848) vol. 2, 597; Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān fī Tafsīr al-qurʾān* (Qum: Manshūrāt Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1403H/1985) vol. 7, 13.

[34] Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* vol. 13, 42-43; see also al-Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al-nuqūl* 198-201; al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl* 128-132; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl* (1846) vol. 1, 340; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf* vol. 2, 143; Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān* vol. 2, 465.

Fig. 4. 1

Position of the message	**Musaylima's message**	**Muḥammad's answer**
Prelude	[Only Ibn Kathīr mentions that Musaylima also cited *Basmalla* in his letter]	With the name of God the most merciful the most compassionate
Sender	From Musaylima the messenger of God	From Muḥammad the messenger of God
Addressee	To Muḥammad the messenger of God	To Musaylima the arch-liar.
Greeting	Peace be upon you	Peace be upon him who follows the guidance
Intermission	Hereafter	Hereafter
Content I	Indeed, I have been made partner with you in authority. To us belongs half of the land and to Quraysh the other half.	The earth belongs to God. He lets whom He will of His creatures inherit it and the result is to the pious.
Content II	But the Quraysh are people who transgressed	-

The following remarks can be made:

1) The phrase "*min Musaylima rasūl Allāh*" is a blatant indication of Musaylima's boldness in declaring his prophethood, especially in addressing someone who was seen as 'the Seal of the prophets.' So far we have no allusion in *sīra, tārīkh, maghāzī*, or *ṭabaqāt* to Musaylima being anything other than courageous. It is true that there were numerous opponents to Muḥammad's prophethood in both Mecca and Medina. However, Musaylima still occupied a unique place in that he positioned himself as equal to Muḥammad.

2) Musaylima recognized the prophethood of Muḥammad, whereas the latter assigned the former the label of an arch-liar, constituting a rejection of Musaylima's claim to prophetic office. The designation of arch-liar was a counter-message. Thus, an inequality was established, an inequality that can be indicated by the fact that recognition of the status of the counterpart came only from the side of Musaylima.

A comparison between the message and the reply also indicates that the degree of confidence on the part of both prophets was unequal. Muḥammad was assured in claiming his sole right to prophethood, while Musaylima's position shows that he saw his position as somewhat weaker. It seems that Musaylima's recognition of Muḥammad's prophethood was designed to honor his counterpart, expecting equal recognition for himself and inviting less hostility.

3) Musaylima greeted Muḥammad peacefully, whereas the latter offered only a rather diplomatic and universal salute. Muḥammad's peaceful greeting was not intended for the former, but for whoever "follows the guidance."

The greeting implies more open interpretations, either to the followers of Muḥammad or to Musaylima himself, on the condition that the latter was willing to rescind his declaration of prophethood.

4) The general tone of the message from Musaylima was realistic in terms of his offer to share authority (see chapter three earlier), whereas the reply was a rather rhetorical rejection. Communication broke down at this point, given that the two prophets did not agree on two vital notions: ownership of the land and sharing the authority. From this, one may speculate that if the reply was composed at a much later date it reflects the claims by the heirs of the Prophet to be pious one (*al-muttaqīn*), i.e., the rightly four guided caliphs and their Umayyad successors. At the time of Ibn Isḥāq, the land and the authority had been inherited by the Abbasids, who also claimed to be the pious.

From the perspective of Musaylima, it stands to reason that to propose sharing authority and prophethood meant that he acknowledged his prophethood as having only local effect, a local cult as it were. By contrast, the universality of prophethood of Muḥammad was unmistakable. Kennedy attributes it to "Muhammad's uncompromising monotheism and his own status as the Apostle of God." In addition, Kennedy says that "the whole world was their [Muslims] area and other deities had no place in it." This universality "...distinguished Muhammad from other 'prophets'."[35] Khalīl ʿAbd al-Karīm offers a rather similar interpretation, stating that Musaylima's letter was perceived as a challenge to the principles of oneness (*tawḥīd*) in theology, language, and politics (*fī-l-ʿaqīda, al-lugha, al-siyāsa*).[36] Margoliouth, in line with Thumāma's statement, concludes that "[t]wo prophets cannot exist in the world at once."[37]

5) In the last part of the message, it seems that Musaylima was so bold as to label the Quraysh as an unjust people/*qawm yaʿtadun* (see chapter three earlier). If the phrase contains authentic words of Musaylima, he thus boldly challenged the Seal of the prophets, who belonged to that tribe. There is no specific response to this challenge, but the general content of the reply does indicate the outrage of "the recipient."

Musaylima's message contains at least one element of good communication, positioning himself and the addressee equally. Yet at the same time, it also indicates his lower self-confidence, and his wish to avoid direct conflict. The response of the message, on the other hand, indicates the high self-confidence of the addressee, who seems to distort the original meaning of the message delivered by Musaylima. The response, moreover, offers nothing but a one-sided perspective on the issue of possessing land and authority, and is a

[35] Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986) 47.

[36] *Dawlat yathrib, baṣāʾir fī ʿām al-wufūd wa fī akhbārih* (Beirut: Sīnā li-l-Nashr, 1999) 163.

[37] D. S. Margouliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (London: G.P. Putnams's Son, 1906) 454.

one-sided communication, by which the reader of the letter was free to ignore the interests of the sender of the message.

If authentic, Musaylima's letter, during his lifetime, was read freely, ignoring his original intention. One might therefore pose the following questions: Did all of the readers—be they the Prophet himself or anyone who came after him—grasp what Musaylima meant? Did they intend to accommodate what Musaylima wanted to share? Similarly, after Musaylima's death, how much freedom did these readers enjoy with respect to understanding of the content of the letter, given the lack of the writer's perspective? Paradoxically, the freedom resulting from Musaylima's death fixed readers' interpretation, which dared not veer from a negative one. In addition, later readers inherited this perspective and even developed this situation as a foundation for narrating Musaylima as the apostate and the arch-liar.

There are many traditions that assert prophethood to be an important part of Islamic dogma, stating that the gate of prophethood was long ago closed. Muḥammad is "the Seal of the prophets (*khātam al-anbiyā*ʾ),"[38] such that nobody is allowed to claim prophetic office after him. We may argue further that both the challenge and the *khātam* doctrine had close affinity in the development of their formulation. Thus, we are now dealing with *ḥadīth* accounts of *khātam*.

The Crude form of *Khātam al-Anbiyā*ʾ

Numerous traditions (*ḥadīths*) portray the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood, its *khātam*, in six motifs: 1) building-brick motif; 2) physical sign motif; 3) stamp/ring motif; 4) miracle motif; 5) *fitna* motif; and 6) end of days motif. The following is the explanation of each motif:

[38] The Qurʾān states: "Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the apostle of God, and the seal of The Prophets (33: 40)." However, in the light of the traditions and theological scholarship, Evstatiev argues, strengthening Y. Friedmann's position that the finality of The Prophethood did not attain its full meaning as a doctrine until the fourth century of Hijra. In other words, it evolved over many generations. It is true that the evolution was due to the roles of interpreters and to certain contextualizations. However, one can disagree with that assumption and instead argue that the notion of finality existed earlier, since the taboo against claiming prophethood was enforced by the caliphs almost from the beginning. In this vein, the story of Musaylima serves as evidence of this process—a story that tells us of the struggle ordered by the first caliph against another claimant to guard the finality of prophethood. See Yohanan Friedmann, "Finality of Prophecy in Sunni Islam" *JSAI* 7 (1986) elsewhere; See also S. Evstatiev, "On the Perception of the *Khātam al-nabiyyīn* Doctrine in Arabic Historical Thought: Confirmation or Finality" in S. Leder, et. al. eds, *Studies in Arabic and Islam* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002) elsewhere 455-467; especially 460.

The building-brick motif

The *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal preserves three traditions, which describe *khātam* as a brick in the building (*bunyān*),[39] chamber (*qaṣr*),[40] or house (*dār*).[41] The following are the expressions: *fa ana tilk labina* (I am the corner-stone), *fa kuntu ana labina* (I am the last brick), and *fa ana mawḍiʿ labina* (I am the place of the brick). The *Ṣaḥīh* of Muslim also records four traditions, which take *bunyān* twice[42] and *bayt*[43] as illustrations. One tradition mentions the brick motif directly.[44] Additionally, al-Tirmidhī presents a tradition with the brick motif, taking *dār* as an illustration.[45]

All the various *matns* (contents) of the above traditions contain direct sayings of the Prophet, defining the seal of the prophethood (*ana khātam nabiyyīn, fakhatamtu al-anbiyāʾ*, and *wa khatama bī nabiyyūn*). In each, the last Prophet is likened to a brick in the building among the previous messengers. We find neither exaggeration nor significant contradiction among the eight traditions, and can even state that there are hardly any discrepancies in wording.

In terms of their transmission (*isnād*), the traditions have rich strands (see appendix *isnād* 3. 1 below), supporting each other in various contexts. This means that the sayings were narrated many times, as they are found in numerous collections. The four narrators were directly linked to the Prophet: Ubay b. Kaʿb, Jābir b. ʿAbdalla, Abū Hurayra and Abū Saʿīd. Thus, it is plausible to conclude that the traditions bear a certain degree of authenticity.

The physical sign/birthmark motif

Ibn Ḥanbal in his *Musnad* records seven traditions,[46] describing *khātam* as a birthmark of the Prophet located between his two shoulders. Its shape is like a dove's egg (*bayẓ ḥammām*). In a tradition, the *khātam* is also surrounded by hairs. In addition, Tirmidhī preserves three traditions,[47] whereas Bukhārī presents four traditions.[48]

[39] Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.) vol. 2, 398.

[40] *Musnad*, vol. 2, 411-412.

[41] *Musnad*, vol. 3, 361.

[42] *Saḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. faḍāʾil*, vol. 2, 987.

[43] *Saḥīḥ*, *k. faḍāʾil*, vol. 2, 987.

[44] *Saḥīḥ*, *k. faḍāʾil*, vol. 2, 988.

[45] *Sunan*, *k. Manāqib*, vol. 2, 926.

[46] *Musnad*, vol. 1, 223, vol. 5, 77, 90, 95, 98, 104, 354, and 441-444.

[47] *Sunan*, *k. Manāqīb*, vol. 2, 932 and 933.

[48] *Ṣaḥīh* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Manāqib*, vol. 1, 45; vol. 2, 698; *k. Marḍā*, vol. 3, 1177; and *k. Adab*, vol. 3, 1227.

Having richer strands than those of the brick-building motif (see appendix *isnād* 3.2 below), the *isnāds* of these traditions are more convincing. Here we find seven Companions linked directly to the Prophet: Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī, Salmān (and Ibn ʿAbbās), Ibn ʿAbbās (and a man from the Banī ʿĀmir), Jābir b. Samra, ʿAlī b. ʿAbi Ṭālib, Sāʾib b. Yazīd, and Umm Khālid. The above Companions glimpsed the birthmark of the Prophet in various contexts. In terms of cross-reference, we find four independent *isnāds* in traditions. Thus, this motif is likely the soundest of all.

While it seems that the contents refer to an insignificant point, i.e., the birthmark of the Prophet, this theme nevertheless dwells an another that is of importance to our discussion, namely the aforementioned Companions' religiosity in testifying to the finality of the prophethood. The truth was attested based on a simple birthmark given—they assumed—by God, as described, for instance, in the exhausting journey of Salmān (*Musnad*). This birthmark played a considerable role in compelling Salmān to embrace Islam and to abandon Christianity and Majūsī practices. It is true that these traditions are not direct sayings of the Prophet himself, but rather observations made by the Companions, facts that leads us to conclude that the early notion of the seal of the Prophethood was conceived among the Companions to be as simple as a physical birthmark.

The stamp/ring motif

This motif appears in the seven traditions recorded by Abu Dāwūd.[49] As with the birthmark motif, these traditions consist of testimonies by the Companions concerning their Prophet. Two witnesses to the existence of this *khātam* were Anas b. Mālik and Ibn ʿUmar (see appendix *isnād* 3.3 below). It seems that each transmission is independent from the other, with no overlapping.

The reports speak mostly of the Prophet's possession of a *khātam*. However, each differs from one another over its specific nature: Is it a ring, a stamp, or both? Is it a ring that also functions as a stamp? The materials are likewise described differently: Is it made of silver, gold, or just a thin piece of metal?

It seems also that there was a process of idealization in the story. Two traditions tell us that Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān inherited the Prophet's *khātam*. However, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib is excluded. This seems to describe ʿAlī's caliphate, which the majority of the *umma* did not unanimously acknowledge given the existence of a rival caliph, Muʿāwiya. It is also interesting that the *khātam* is said to have fallen into a well in the time of ʿUthmān, thus, ʿAlī had no opportunity to inherit it. This was plausibly viewed from the Sunni, not the Shiʿi perspective. One can perhaps argue that the traditions began circulating after the reigns of three guided caliphs, when the idealization of their

[49] *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. khātam*, vol. 2, 701-702.

figures took place. It is also likely that these traditions entered into circulation at a much later time, serving as nostalgia for the ideal past.

The wording of the *khātam*, *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, is mentioned in five traditions. A report from Ibn Saʿd supports this, informing us that the *khātam* functioned as a stamp. Furthermore, it was apparently made by the years 6-7 H, after Hudaybiyya. It is justified by the story that, after the Prophet sent messengers and letters to some kings, calling them to Islam, someone reminded him that "kings do not read the letter unless they are stamped." The first *khātam* was then made from silver (*fiḍḍa*).[50]

Turning back for a moment to the manuscripts of the letters of the Prophet, it is true that the stamps bear the three words: *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*. It is plausible that the stamp model in the manuscripts was only an imitation of earlier one. But then another problem confronts us: In what year did the stamp begin to be used? Based on tradition G, the use of *khātam* as a stamp began as late as the reign of ʿUthmān. It is hard to argue that it is the Prophet himself who started this practice, and that it was just imitated by ʿUthmān. Yet it could be that the circulation of the tradition was caused by the need to justify ʿUthmān's practice of that of or even later rulers.

Nonetheless, the *khātam*—whose words evoke the *Shahāda*, "*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*"—serves also as a religious expression of early Islamic faith. It is worth recalling that the heading of the letter of Muḥammad to Musaylima begins with "*min Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*." It should also be borne in mind that the date of the *Shahāda* is likely as old as the *Basmalla*, as attested by the coinage, graffiti, and monuments.[51]

[50] *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 1, 258.

[51] For material evidence which contains *Basmalla*, one can point to two Arab-Sananian coins of ʿAbd al-Mālik b. ʿAbdalla, dated 66 and 67. Coins of Khālid b. ʿAbdalla (71/690-91) also contain the phrase *Bismilla muḥammad rasūl allāh*. See Treadwell, "The Oran Drachms" 260, and 243-245.

For the attribution of *Shahāda* coinage to Zubayrid faction during the civil war against Marwanid, see, for example, Bates "History, geography and numismatics in the first century of Islamic coinage, *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau/Revue Sueisse de Numismatique*, 65 (1986) 246-250; Johns, "Archeology and the history" 426; Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins* vol. 1, 96-97; Gaube, *Arabosasanidhische Numismatik* 62.

An Arab-Sasanian coin—dated as early as at the reign of Muʿāwiya and as presented by Foss—evokes the phrase. See Foss, "A Syrian Coinage of Mu'awiya?" 364, 365, figure 12 and 13. See also comments from J. Johns, "Archeology and the History" 419-421.

On the Dome of the Rock, the *Shahāda* is stated five times on the outer face of the octagonal arcade, and once on the inner face, according to the same frequency as that of the *Basmalla*.

For the examples of official stamps of both the Abbasid and the Umayyad rulers, see, for instance, Paul Balog, *Umayyad, Abbasid and Tulunid*, plates: 1; 6; 39; 63; 87; 132; 212; 221; 272; 348A; and 352. It is worth noting that their shapes are described in terms similar to that of the *khātam* as a physical sign of The Prophet. They are round and some of them are as big as a dove's egg. However, none contains "*Muḥammad rasūl allāh*," though some evoke the *Basmalla*. Many of them contain words similar to those mentioned in the letter of Musaylima, namely *amr/amīr*. For example, a principal stamp of al-Manṣūr reads "*Mimmā amar bih ʿabd*

The miracle motif

Two traditions, found in the collections of Ibn Ḥanbal[52] and al-Dārimī,[53] preserve a lengthy narration of the operation on the breast of the Prophet by two births. There they placed the *khātam* (the seal): *Wa khātama ʿalayh bi khātam al-anbiyā*ʾ. The end of the story describes a light coming from the Prophet, which shines as far as to the palaces (*quṣūr*) of Syria. So far, no other corroborator is available to help us determine the dating of the traditions coming into circulation. Furthermore, the content is colored by mythology and propaganda of the Umayyads (the light of the Prophet irradiated Shams). Perhaps the traditions came into circulation at the time of the civil war between the Marwānids and Zubayrids. If earlier, it might have emerged during the conflict of Muʿāwiya with ʿAlī. The reports also give information of another interpretation of the seal of prophethood. Here we are told that the seal was given even during the childhood of Muḥammad. It functioned to legitimize the truth of his prophethood, which was also vital to the political legitimacy of the Umayyads.

The *fitna* motif

Three traditions—preserved in the collections of Ibn Ḥanbal,[54] Tirmidhī,[55] and Abū Dāwūd[56]—relate the *khātam* to the warning of the Prophet due to existence of oppressive leaders in the later *umma*. The *umma* would turn into pagans and polytheists. There would also be thirty liars, claiming to be prophets. "I am the seal of the prophets (*khātam al-nabiyyin*), no prophet after me (*la nabiyya baʿdī*)," says the Prophet. Considering the chapter heading of Abū Dāwūd, it is clear that the content of the reports had a certain relationship with the historical background of *fitna* (civil wars).

The content of the traditions also indicates a process of contextualization of the situation of the *umma* in a time of disturbance. They deal with the themes of danger to the *umma*, leadership issues, and the emergence of liars. It is plausible to assume that this new interpretation of the seal of Prophethood arose out of the context of chaos during the civil wars. In addition, the prohibition against claiming prophethood is also made clearer in these traditions.

Interestingly, the thirty liars (*kadhdhābūn*) in the traditions also include the later rebel leaders, i.e., al-Mukhtār (whose letter we have discussed in

allāh ʿabd allāh amīr al-muʾminīn: (Among those things which ordered the servant of Allāh, ʿAbd Allāh, Commander of the faithful)."

[52] *Musnad*, vol. 4, 184.

[53] *Sunan* (Damascus: Bāb al-Barīd, 1349H) *Muqaddima*, vol. 1, 8.

[54] *Musnad*, vol. 5, 278.

[55] *Sunan, k. Manāqib*, vol. 2, 571.

[56] *Sunan, k. fitan wa malāḥim*, vol. 2, 707.

chapter two above, and whose story we will further discuss in chapter eight below). The earlier meaning of "liars," however, refer to some prophets contemporary to Muḥammad, such as Musaylima, Sajjāḥ, Ṭulayḥa, and al-Ansī. In this light, the new contextualization of the *khātam* took place. In addition, the reenactment of the story of Musaylima regained its validity.

Thus, we see a parallel development of the notion of *khātam* and the later incorporation of the story of Musaylima in the doctrine, an incorporation that indicates that his threat did not cease after his death, and was reenacted in the *khātam* context. Here, the figure of Musaylima as the arch-liar served as an archetype, which could easily be applied to other figures. Friedmann puts it that "[i]t stands to reason, however, that the emergence of (false) prophetic claimants in the Muslim community gave an impetus to the dogma concerning the finality of Muḥammad's prophecy."[57]

The day of resurrection motif

The relationship between the theme of the day of resurrection and the notion of *khātam* is found in one tradition contained in the *Sunan* of Tirmidhī.[58] The tradition narrates at length a story of the day of resurrection and the problem of *shafāʿa* (mediation/intercession). We are told that one cannot hope for the mediation from prophets like Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Jesus; that it is the prerogative of Muḥammad alone to help people. In that tradition a person—who seeks for intercession—is described to say: "*Yā Muḥammad anta rasūl Allāh wa khātam al-anbiyāʾ*/O Muḥammad you are the messenger of God and the *khātam* of the prophets."

It is likely, however, that the tradition emerged quite late, since the content shows detailed embellishment in the dialogue between the *shafāʿa* seeker and each prophet. We may rely on Schacht's and Juynboll's theory in this case that the more detailed the report, the younger it is. It also sheds new light on the eschatological meaning of the *khātam*, which serves as a further elaboration of the simpler and older brick-building motif.

In view of all reports which contain six motifs above, the more numerous the strands of the *isnāds*, the earlier they may be dated. The birthmark and brick-building motif have the most, and as a result their motifs may be considered the oldest, extending back to the Companions. The rest of the reports, on the other hand, contain blatant idealization, contextualization, and mythologization and entail only two strands or a single one. Given this fact, we may speculate that these traditions perhaps came quite late into circulation.

[57] Friedmann, "Finality of Prophecy" 193.

[58] *k. qiyāma*, vol. 2, 622.

The report, which connects Musaylima and the *khātam al-anbiyaʾ*, was therefore likely the result of later developments during the civil wars. Thus, Shoufani's conclusion—that "Musaylima's claim that he was a prophet is in itself a denial of Muhammad's prophethood, especially since Muhammad claimed to be the 'Seal of Prophets'"[59]—should be revisited. Moreover, it is unlikely that the doctrine of *khātam* in the year 10 H was fully developed. In fact, the maturity of this doctrine was elaborated much later than Musaylima's lifetime. Thus the connection between his story and the doctrine certainly occurred later.

Responses after the Prophet Muḥammad

In the following discussion, I would like to argue that the challenge that Musaylima's letter posed was not limited to the time of Muḥammad. It has operated in many generations, such as the four rightly guided caliphs (*khulafāʾ rāshidūn*), the Umayyads, and early Abbasids, since these caliphs saw themselves as the true heirs of prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and authority (*amr*).[60] These two concepts, authority and prophethood, certainly outlived the Medinan state and the lives of Muḥammad and Musaylima. This was indeed among the reasons for preserving and reenacting the dangerous threat of Musaylima in *sīra* literature. Once the myth was born, it had to be reenacted repeatedly. This section deals with the praxis of the guardianship of *khātam* performed by later caliphs.

As seen in the text of the answer above, Musaylima did not deserve prophethood or its accompanying authority. Indeed, the prophethood was

[59] Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 83.

[60] Al-Ṭabarī presents three possible interpretations of the phrase *ulū al-amr* (Q. 4: 59): 1) the phrase refers to *umarāʾ* (sing. *amīr*, authority in charge), which originally referred to The Prophet's Companions, whom The Prophet sent as deputies to Syria, and whom the *umma* had to obey (according to al-Nasāʾī, this was the case with ʿAbdalla b. Khudhāfa b. Qays b. ʿĀdi); 2) the phrase may also refer to *ahl al-fiqh wa-l-ʿilm*, which simply refers to *ʿulamāʾ/fuqahāʾ* (scholars/jurists). (Al-Ṭabarsī is in favor of this meaning); 3) The phrase refers to The Prophet's prominent Companions—e.g. Abū Bakr and ʿUmar—who hold caliphal authority after the death of The Prophet. Al-Zamakhsharī agrees with this last meaning, specifying the authorities as belonging to *al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidūn*. See Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* vol. 8, 497; al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Bayʿa* 27, vol. 2, 692; Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* vol. 2, 64; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf* vol. 1, 524.

Muslim literature shows that ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb was called for the first time *amīr al-muʾminīn* (a commander of believers). See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 4, 208-9. The oldest material evidence that attests to this title is in the form of a coin which confirms Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān as *amīr al-muʾminīn*. See Jeremy Johns, "Archeology and the History" 418-419; John Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan* vol. 1, 25-26; Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period. Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean 1* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002) 15 plates 17. 245-6, 18. 269; Clive Foss, "A Syrian Coinage of Muʿawiya?" 360 n. 28.

sealed. However, the guardianship of its mission was then inherited by later caliphs, an idea that is legitimized by the saying of the Prophet: "Indeed, there is no prophet after me [Muḥammad], [but] there will be caliphs and they are numerous."[61]

According to this formula, therefore, Musaylima had no right at all to claim the prophethood. Indeed, the immediate heir of prophethood in Medina, Abū Bakr, continued to reject Musaylima's claim, carrying out this duty by waging war against the latter claimant. For the caliph, the death of Muḥammad did not mean the end of the latter's prophethood. It was, therefore, his duty to guard this legacy, not establish a new one. Abū Bakr is reported to have made the following statement: "Muḥammad is only apostle. The apostles before him have passed away; so, if he dies or is killed, will you turn on your heels?" Among the focal points of the above saying, attributed to Abū Bakr, was the day of performing the task of guardianship. In particular, in his response to Musaylima and other claimants to prophethood after the death of Muḥammad, the caliph stressed: "I have learned that some of you have turned back from your religion after you had acknowledged Islam and labored in it, out of negligence of God and ignorance of His command, and in compliance with the devil." The caliph then declared wars against these claimants.[62]

Thus, the response to Musaylima's challenge was not limited to Muḥammad's time, but continued to be implemented by the latter's successors. Abū Bakr's response above confirms this, as well as his dispatch of Khālid b. Wālid and his troops, who brought about the death of the challenger (for more on this, see chapter eleven below).

However, the ghost of Musaylima in the literature (*maghāzī, sīra, tārīkh,* and *iʿjāz*) has continued to haunt.

Waḥshī claimed credit for having killed Musaylima in the Battle of Yamāma.[63] A. Noth, however, subscribes to the view that this and other various reports show more literary style than historical fact. To illustrate this point, ʿUṣfūrī lists three names, whereas al-Balādhurī names six persons,[64]

[61] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, k. ʿImāra*, vol. 2, 812.

[62] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 249-251; *The History, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. F. M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 55-58; Balansī, *Tārīkh al-Ridda*, gleaned from *al-Iktifa* by Khurshid Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, 1970) 27-29; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Ḥātim (Cairo: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī al-Muaʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma, 1383/1963) vol. 18, 386-387.

[63] "During our campaign at the time of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, we passed Hims in the evening. We [met someone and] called: 'Waḥshi!'. ....He then told us about his affairs of murdering Hamza and Musaylima..." See *Kitāb al-Maghāzī al-Wāqidī*, ed. Marsden Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) vol. 1, 286.

[64] Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen Frühislmischer Geschichtüberlieferung, Teil 1: Themen und Formen* (Bonn: Selbtsverlag des Orientalischen Se-

including the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (see also chapter eleven below). Kister, however, rejects this possibility on the grounds that "... we have no evidence that he participated in the battle at all."[65] Yet it has a certain meaning for our discussion that Muʿāwiya had an interest in claiming so, for it was part of his caliphal legitimacy and his duty as the true heir and guardian of prophethood. The claim may be not historical, but it conveys justification and legitimization. ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān (and other Umayyad leaders) were moreover the narrators of this event; thus, the two caliphs declared their task of guardianship with ʿAbd al-Mālik claiming: "*fa qaḍaytu wa Allāh la Muʿāwiya bi qatlih.*"[66]

Time passed, and the caliphs carried out the task of maintaining the legacy of guardianship against any claimants to prophethood. Thus, the *khātam al-anbiyāʾ* had a particular affinity to the caliphal office in this respect. We have more attestations though, such as the letter of an Umayyad caliph, al-Wālid II, in nominating his two sons—Ḥakam and ʿUthmān—as his successors. In addition, the letter also clarifies the relationship between the seal of prophethood and the caliphal office, and reads as follows:

> Then God appointed His caliphs to follow in the path of Muḥammad's prophetic ministry, after He had taken His prophet unto Himself, and (after) *He had sealed His revelation by Muḥammad*, in order that His rule should be accomplished, His sunna and His penalties established, and His precepts and laws adopted. *This was done so that, by His caliphs*, God might confirm Islam, by them He might consolidate its sway, by them He might strengthen its ties, by them He might safeguard its sanctities, (and) by them He might administer justice amongst His servants and might maintain the common wealth in His lands." [italic mine][67]

It is obvious that prophethood and caliphal authority were conceived of interdependently: God had sealed the office of prophecy, and the caliphs performed their task in protecting this seal. Furthermore, the seal of prophethood is repeated in the caliph's letter: "*By him [Muḥammad] he set the seal on*

minars der Unviersität Bonn, 1973) 106; idem and L. I .Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition. A Source-Critical Study*, trans. Michael Bonner (New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1994) 115; Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, vol. 1, 107; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 95.

65 M. J. Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the Conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002) 48.

66 Nisar Ahmed Faruqi translates the sayings of ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān preserved by Al-Balādhurī into the following: "By God, you have decided in favor of Muʿāwiya." See Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography* (Ph. D Dissertation, the university of Delhi/Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1979) 189. See also, Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm al-Malāyīn, 1970) vol. 8, 760.

67 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 220; *The History* trans. Hillenbrand 108. For more on the discussion of the letter, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph, Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 120; see also T. Nagel, *Rechtleitung und Kalifat: Versuch über eine Grundfrage der islamischen Geschichte* (Bonn: Selbstverlage des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität, 1975) 82-83.

His revelation. In Muḥammad, God accumulated the bounties which He had bestowed on the prophets who had preceded him [italic mine].[68]" Why should the caliph have stressed this? Perhaps it was for no other reason than the sake of the caliphs themselves, who inherited the 'sealed prophethood.' This is made clear in the statement: "...the caliphs of God succeeded each other as sovereigns over that which God had made them inherit from His prophets and that which He had entrusted to them."[69] Thus, the caliphs served as the guardians of God's religion.

After the Umayyads fell from power, the Abbasids took up the task of protecting the unity of the caliphal office and the sealed prophethood. A letter of ʿAbdalla b. Hārūn al-Rashīd, nominating his son ʿAlī b. Mūsā b. Jaʿfar as successor, states that: "Ultimately the prophecy of God reached Muḥammad, at a time of interval between messengers, obliteration of knowledge, cessation of revelation, and proximity of the Hour. Through him God sealed the prophets, making him their witness, [and so] preserving them."[70] A part of the text mentions *khātam* explicitly: "When the prophecy came to an end, with Muḥammad [may God bless and give peace upon him] *God sealed revelation and the message,* He made the mainstay of the religion and the ordering of the government (*amr*) of the Muslims (reside) in the caliphate,....[italics mine]."[71]

In short, the task of guardianship of the sealed prophethood was later handed down to the Umayyads and the Abbasids, extending well beyond the time of Musaylima. With his ghost always present, the notion of the guardianship embodied in the doctrine of *khatam* had constantly to be renewed.

Readers' Perspective

It should be kept in mind that the reply from Muḥammad is located in the *sīra*, whose writing by Ibn Isḥāq under the patronage of caliph al-Maʾmūn was situated in a certain discourse, maintaining the connection between the sealed prophethood and the caliphal office. Ibn Isḥāq, as the first narrator of Musaylima, could not escape from the discursive situation (see chapter three earlier). Thus, it is not surprising that the answer reflected a broader discursive setting, spanning from the time of Musaylima to that of Ibn Isḥāq.

[68] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 219; *The History: The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate*, trans. Carole Hillenbrand (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 107; For more discussion on the above theme, see, for instance, Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph* 119; see also T. Nagel, *Rechtleitung und Kalifat* 82-83.

[69] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 219; trans. Hillenbrand, *The History*, 107. See also a letter of the caliph Yazīd b. al-Walīd, addressed to the people of Iraq after the death of Walīd b. Yazīd, Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 278; *The History*, trans. Hillenbrand 205.

[70] P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 134. cf. F. Gabrieli, *al-Ma'mun e gli ʿAlidi* (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1929) 38-39; al-Qalqashandi, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Sulṭāniyya, 1334/1916) vol. 9, 362-6.

[71] Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph* 135.

Moreover, the content of the reply from the Prophet mirrors the attitudes of his successors Abū Bakr, ʿUthmān, and Muʿāwiya and even the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphs down to al-Manṣūr. They were committed to protect the sealed prophethood and to reject any claimants. Although the troops of Khālid b. al-Walīd, under the orders of Abū Bakr, successfully annihilated the political and religious threat of Musaylima, the latter's ghost continued to haunt. As regards this, the task of guardianship always regained its validity.

Readers of the story of Musaylima inherited the previous understanding of its significance but based on the perspective of the reply, the message itself. Thus, the Prophet himself built this first foundation by rejecting Musaylima's proposal, which later readers perpetuated. It is clear that the writers of *sīra* and *tārīkh* literature, particularly after Ibn Isḥāq, always view Musaylima as an antagonist, as they continued this legacy and perspective. However, this played its own role in the discourse in terms of guarding the theological and political order of early Muslim society. This, however, leads to another consequence that the message of Musaylima had always been viewed as a threat to that order.

Our discussion of Musaylima then has not focused on merely questioning the authenticity of the letter and the answer but in seeking the multiple contexts of both texts. As we have seen, each word, phrase, and sentence contained in the message and the answer are merely repetition of other texts. Indeed, the words appear in various places and times. Thus, the phrases—*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, the *Basmalla*, and the Qur'ānic citation in the text—may be seen as part of the style and standard paradigm of early Muslim literature.

As we have seen in chapters two and three, the contents of the message attributed to Musaylima and the reply attributed to Muḥammad are paradigmatic. So is the story of the meeting between the two, which will become our subject of discussion in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

The Encounter of the Two Prophets

> Painters, I call them blind. Upon close inspection, they seem to be creators for the most part. They look by means of their palettes and build a nature that is friendly and sweet and pleasant. But do you think that in their work you can read how things really are in grandmother Nature? Far from it. An alley can be called a street, a hut a house and a plant a tree. But alleys, huts and plants are shadows and dreams compared to streets, houses and trees.
>
> (Huygens)[1]

> The purity of the inside can only be restored if the charges are brought home against exteriority as a supplement, inessential yet harmful to the essence, a surplus that ought never to have come to be added to the untouched plenitude of the inside.......
> ....in order to cure the latter of the *pharmakon* and rid it of the parasite, it is thus necessary to put the outside back in its place. To keep the outside out.
>
> (Derrida)[2]

Various classical Muslim sources tell us that not only did Muḥammad and Musaylima have correspondence, the two prophets also met. This chapter will explore different versions of the story of their encounter, with attention paid to the development of the story at the hands of many narrators.

[1] As quoted and translated by Jürgen Pieters, *Speaking with the Dead, Explorations in Literature and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2005) 43.

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1981) 128; Penelope Deutscher, *How to Read Derrida* (London: Granta Book, 2005) 1.

A Prophet among the Delegation of the Tribe of Ḥanīfa

It is said that the tribe Ḥanīfa, which dwelled in Yamāma, once sent a delegation to Muḥammad, the Prophet in Medina. This may be interpreted to mean that the tribe might have sought, as did other Arabian tribes, a political alliance with Medina. The sincerity of this delegation is attested to by the reported conversion of the members of the deputation to Islam. However, what is most interesting about the story is that the prophet from Yamāma, that is Musaylima, is said to have been present among the members of the deputation.

This event, dated to the year 10 H/631-632 AD, may be seen as the only direct encounter between the two prophets. The account given by Ibn Isḥāq reads as follows:

> The deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa came to the Messenger of God bringing with them Musaylima b. Ḥabīb al-Ḥanafī, the arch-liar. They lodged in the house of a daughter of al-Ḥārith, a woman of the Anṣār of the tribe al-Najjar.[3]

Ibn Isḥāq does not provide any specific names for the members of the deputation. For this we have to appeal to Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/784),[4] who enumerates them as follows: 1) Raḥḥāl b. ʿUnfuwwa (Rajjāl[5] or Naḥḥār b. ʿUnfuwwa)[6]; 2) Salmā b. Ḥanẓala al-Suhaymī (the leader of the deputation); 3) Ṭalq b. ʿAlī b. Qays, 4) Humrān b. Jābir of the tribe Shāmir; 5) ʿAlī b. Sinān (Shaybān);[7] 6) al-ʿAqʿaṣ b. Maslama, 7) Zayd b. ʿAbd ʿAmr; and 8) Musaylima b. Ḥabīb. Although al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) provides only a short account of the event, he mentions another name, that is, Mujjāʿa b. Murāra.[8] Moreover, al-ʿAynī (762/1361-855/1451), assigning the authority to al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822), provides a further report that the delegation numbered seventeen in total.[9]

[3] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 576; Trans. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 636; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 137-138; trans. Ismail K. Poonawala, *The last Years of The Prophet: the Formation of the State* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1988) 95-96.

[4] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960) vol. 1, 316. See also the German translation by J. Wellhausen, *Medina vor dem Islam* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985) 156-158.

[5] Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 147.

[6] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 5, 51.

[7] In the earlier edition of Ibn Saʿd, ed. K. V. Zetterstéen (Leiden: Brill 1905) vol. 5, 401, the name reads *Shaybān*, whereas in the new edition (1960) *Sinān*.

[8] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 103.

[9] Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-Qārī, Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.) vol. 18, 23. See also al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ ʿalā-l-mawāhib al-laduniyya li-l-ʿallāma al-qasṭallānī*

It is noteworthy that even Ibn Isḥāq himself provides two versions of the atual meeting between the deputation and Muḥammad:

A. One of the scholars of Medina told me that the tribe Ḥanīfa brought him to the Messenger of God hiding him in garments. The messenger was sitting among his companions having a palm-branch with some leaves on its upper end. When he came to the messenger as they were covering him with garments he spoke to him and asked him [for a gift]. The apostle answered: 'if you were to ask me for this palm branch I would not give it to you.'

B. A shaykh of the tribe Ḥanīfa from the people of Yamāma told me that the incident happened otherwise. He alleged that the deputation came to the Messenger of God having left Musaylima behind with the camels and the baggage. When they accepted Islam they remembered where he was, and told the apostle that they had left a companion of theirs to guard their stuff. The Messenger of God ordered that he should be given the same as the rest, saying, 'His position is no worse than yours,'i.e. in minding the property of his companions. That is what the Prophet meant.[10]

One can point to several differences between the two versions of the story: 1) Account A was based on the version of a Medinan scholar, and B on that of a Shaykh from the tribe Ḥanīfa; 2) account A reports an actual meeting between Muḥammad and Musaylima, whereas in B Musaylima is not even said to have come to the meeting; 3) account A relates a conversation between the two, whereas in B Muḥammad speaks in the absence of Musaylima; 4) account A portrays Musaylima as hiding in a pile of garments, whereas in B he is depicted as guarding the luggage; and 5) although both accounts blacken Musaylima in some respects, account B supplies a somewhat better image than account A does in mentioning the praise bestowed by Muḥammad upon Musaylima for his devotion to duty.

Moreover, the source from Yamāma seems to have wanted to give a better image of his own people, whereas the source taken from the Medinan merely seems intent on dramatizing the narration by ridiculing Musaylima. Nevertheless, both versions of the story tend to emphasize the cowardliness of Musaylima, demonstrating that this 'false claimant' did not dare to face 'the real' Prophet, choosing instead to hide.

Ibn Saʿd provides further information as to the arrival of the delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa. He relates how they lodged in the house of Ramla, a daughter of al-Ḥārith. The delegation's members were welcomed and treated prop-

(Cairo: al-Azhar, 1327H) vol. 4, 19.

10 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 576; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 636; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 137-8; trans. Fred M. Donner, *The History of Ṭabarī vol. x, The Conquest of Arabia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 96.

erly as guests, and served lunch and dinner. Details are provided of the menu, which consisted of bread and meat, then bread and milk, after that bread and yoghurt, and finally dates as dessert. During their meeting with the Prophet in a mosque, they converted to Islam. Given the vivid and detailed description of the report, it likely rerpesents a later literary interpretation, rather than a report made by the eyewitnesses to the incident.

From al-ʿAynī we learn the pedigree of the host, Ramla, that is Ramla bt. al-Ḥārith b. Niʿāma b. al-Ḥārith b. Zayd, from tribe Najjar of Anṣār (i.e., native Medinan). Also called Umm Thābit, she had married Muʿādh b. Afrāʾ. Her house was commonly used for lodging the members of deputations, like those of the tribes Maḥārib, Kilāb, and Taghlīb.[11] One may infer from the above that this very detailed pedigree also resulted from a later development of the Muslim literature, especially given a date as late as that of al-ʿAynī. To put the point differently, the identity of the host, Ramla, also grew over the course of time from a mere citation of her father's name into the greater, more detailed pedigree of al-ʿAynī.

It is noteworthy that Ibn Saʿd seems to agree with the version of the story from the Shaykh of Yamāma, i.e., that Musaylima neither met Muḥammad nor became Muslim as the other members of the deputation did. It is also interesting that Raḥḥāl b. ʿUnfuwwa, playing a double roles as both a member of the deputation and a prominent follower of Musaylima, memorized the Qurʾān from the known Qurʾānic expert Ubayy b. Kaʿb.[12]

At the end of the story, the Prophet Muḥammad is said to have given each member of the deputation five ounces of silver, after which they are supposed to have reminded the Prophet that one of them, that is Musaylima, did not attend the meeting.

Given that Ibn Saʿd does not cite Ibn Isḥāq as his source of information, it may well be that Ibn Saʿd relied on another tradition. Indeed, the report may serve as a further corroboration of the reliability of the deputation story.[13]

Later *ḥadīth* literature also preserves the story of the delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa, as may be seen from both the collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875). The following is a summary of their content and chains of transmission:

[11] Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī* vol. 18, 26. See also Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 7, 651.

[12] For more on Ubay b. Kaʿb, see, for instance, al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-qārī, "Bāb manāqib ubayy b. kaʿb"* vol. 16, 271.

[13] The chain of transmission given by Ibn Saʿd is as follows:
Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Aslāmī
al-Ḍaḥḥak b. ʿUthmān
Yazīd b. Rummān
Muḥammad b. Saʿd
ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Kurshī
Other unmentioned names.

A. Al-Bukhārī—Abū al-Yaman—Shuʿayb—ʿAbdalla b. Abī Ḥusayn—Nāfiʿ b. Jubayr—Ibn ʿAbbās: As Musaylima came with the deputation, in front of his people he said "if Muḥammad give me (authority) after him, I will follow him." Muḥammad, who had a palm branch and was accompanied by Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās,[14] welcomed them. When passing Musaylima and his people, the Prophet said "if you ask me for this palm branch, I will not give it to you. Do not act against the matter of God in you. If you retreat, God will punish you. Indeed, I see you [now] as I saw your presence in my dream. Thābit will answer you." Then Muḥammad left.[15]

B. Al-Bukhārī—Saʿīd b. Muḥammad al-Jurmī—Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm—Ibrāhīm—Ṣāliḥ—ibn ʿUbayda b. Nashīd—ʿUbaydalla b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUtba: Musaylima came to Medina with the deputation. He lodged in the house of the daughter of al-Ḥārith. Alongside him was a daughter of al-Ḥārith b. Kurayz. She was Umm ʿAbdilla b. ʿĀmir. The Messenger of God, accompanied by Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās serving as the speaker of the Messenger of God, came to meet them. The Prophet had a twig/branch in his hands. They then had a conversation. Musaylima said, "If you wish to make a deal between us about the authority, give it to us after you." Muḥammad said, "If you ask me for this twig, I will not give it to you. Indeed, I see you [now] as I saw your presence in my dream. Here is Thābit b. Qays who will answer you on behalf of me." The Prophet, then, left.[16]

C. Muslim—Muḥammad b. Sahl al-Tamīmī—Abū al-Yaman—Shuʿayb—ʿAbdalla b. Abī Ḥusayn—Nāfiʿ b. Jubayr—Ibn ʿAbbās: Shares the same content as report A.[17]

It may be noted that both traditions A and C share the same *isnād* and *matn*. In terms of the former, both A and C present similar transmissions from Abū al-Yaman to Ibn ʿAbbās. Thus, report C cannot be treated as corroborative of report A, because both came from the same source.

Al-ʿAynī further explains, regarding the report contained in the first *ḥadīth*, that the deputation came to Medina twice. In the first deputation, Musaylima was only a member (*tābiʿ*), while in the second he served as a leader (*matbūʿ*). However, he adds, in neither deputation did Musaylima face Muḥammad directly: *"lam yafud fi Musaylima tawajja binafsih ilayh."*

[14] Thābit died later in the Battle of Yamāma (see chapter eleven below). See also Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-muḍī*, ed. Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudir (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 1, 92.

[15] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. maghāzī* 72, vol. 2, 872.

[16] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *k. maghāzī* 73, vol. 2, 873.

[17] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-Ruʾyā* 5 (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) vol. 2, 982.

Al-Ḥalabī (d. 1044/1635 H) looks at the same report, but adds different information. In the first delegation Musaylima was just a common follower; his designated task was to guard the luggage. The second time he came to Medina, however, he came as as a leader, and was welcomed by Muḥammad along with the others. Interestingly, Musaylima wore some kind of garment meant to indicate of his leadership.[18] It was the people of the tribe Ḥanīfa, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr suggests, who had taken the initiative of adorning him with this garment (*wa hum yastarūnah bi al-thiyāb*).[19] In addition, the garment, Al-Zurqānī explains, conveyed the need "*ikrām lah wa taʿẓīm* (to honor and to respect him/Musaylima)." This implies that the event was seen as particularly important in the eyes of the people of Ḥanīfa.[20] The most reliable report, however, according to al-Ḥalabī, is that the delegation came to Medina once only. Al-Zurqānī also doubts the double visit of the delegation.[21] After all, it stands to reason that two delegations story may have resulted from a later wish to conflate the two versions of the account of Ibn Isḥāq, namely that taken from a Shyakh of Yamāma and that from a Medinan.

As regards the role of the garment in the story, it can be said to have two different meanings. On the one hand, the garment, if used as a covering could be seen as indicating the cowardice of Musaylima, referring to his act of hiding and not daring to face Muḥammad. On the other hand, garment may instead have emphasized Musaylima's status, already heightened by the praise he received from Muḥammad for guarding the luggage. In addition, al-Zurqānī and al-Ḥalabī regard the garment as recognition of the status of Musaylima. It is impossible to say with certainty which meaning was the true one. However, what is acquired is that the garment in the retelling by different narrators.

According to al-ʿAynī, tradition A of al-Bukhārī is more reliable than B in terms of both *matn* and *isnād*.[22] However, report B contains an interesting story, where direct conversation between Muḥammad and Musaylima is presented. Yet this tradition is silent on the question of the garment said to have been worn by Musaylima.

[18] Al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīra al-amīn al-maʾmūn/Sīra al-ḥalabīyya* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, n.d.) vol. 3, 255.

[19] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa siyar*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr, 1386/1966) vol. 11, 270.

[20] Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 20.

[21] Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 24.

[22] In the case of the transmission of report A, al-ʿAynī provides logical connections among the transmitters and proves that they were historical figures. By contrast, al-ʿAynī considers tradition B to be *irsāl*, because the *isnād* ends only in ʿUbaydalla b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUtba, a Successor. The chain of the transmission does not even reach a Companion. Additionally, al-Bukhārī, according to al-ʿAynī, simply misplaced tradition B in the heading of the story of al-Ansī. See al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*, vol. 18, 23-24.

After providing a detailed identity for Umm ʿAbdilla b. ʿÂmir, al-ʿAynī also explains why she was by Musaylima's side during the delegation. She, according to al-ʿAynī whose account is based on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, used to be his wife (*likawnihā kānat imraʾatuh*).[23]

We can also find the same report in the *Ghazwat* of Ibn Ḥubaysh. However, he, it seems, mixes reports A and B of al-Bukhārī. In addition, Ibn Ḥubaysh neglects to provide the complete chain of authority; instead, he mentions only Ibn ʿAbbās, the first authority contained in report A. However, the content is identical to tradition B, in mentioning the daughter of al-Ḥārith in the story.[24]

Surprisingly, Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī (d. 405/1014) preserves a tradition[25] which record the meeting between Muḥammad and Musaylima. In this tradition, Musaylima asked the Prophet whether the latter testified to Musaylima's prophethood. In response to this, the Prophet said that he believed in all prophets, and yet added: "This man is strange and, indeed, his people will be destroyed." Not only does this tradition contain a rather distinguished account of the meeting and conversation between Muḥammad and Musaylima, it also testifies to the boldness of Musaylima, who, interestingly, sought an acknowledgment of his prophethood from Muḥammad. This picture differs sharply from the accounts provided by Ibn Isḥāq above describing Musaylima as having been interrogated by the Prophet, not the other way around.

Various Styles of Telling the Story

Given the fact that al-Bukhārī included the story of the deputation in his collection, one can see that there was a shift in the treatment of the story of the deputation in early Muslim literature. That is, a merely profane story (*qiṣṣa*) evolved into more sacred *ḥadīth* and was given a complete *isnād* in the *ḥadīth* collection.

The following points of comparison between the reports of Ibn Isḥāq and those of Bukhāri can be made: 1) Both Ibn Isḥāq and al-Bukhārī present two accounts; 2) Ibn Isḥāq ignores the *isnād*, whereas al-Bukhārī provides the complete one; 3) The two accounts of Ibn Isḥāq were taken from two different sources—one deriving from a Shaykh of Yamāma and the other from a Medinan—and constitute slightly different versions, as shown above. Al-Bukhārī, however, seems to rely only on one version, the one that came from the Medinan informant; 4) The content of the reports of al-Bukhārī includes other messages outside the deputation story, i.e., the texts of the letters of

[23] Al-ʿAynī, *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*, vol. 18, 26

[24] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt ibn ḥubaysh/Kitāb al-ghazawāt al-ḍāmina al-kāmila wa-l-futūḥ al-jāmiʿa al-ḥāfila al-kāʾina fi ayyām al-khulafāʾ al-awwal al-thalātha: Abī Bakr al-ṣiddīq was abī ḥafṣ ʿumar wa abī ʿamr dhī al-nūrayn ʿuthmān*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992) vol. 1, 51.

[25] Ḥākim Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalā-l-saḥīḥayn fi al-aḥādīth* (Riyad: Maktaba wa Maṭābiʿ al-Naṣr li-l-Ḥadīth, n.d.) vol. 4, 53-54.

both Musaylima and Hawdha b. ʿAlī (for Hawdha's letter, see our discussion below). In view of al-ʿAynī's commentary, the two themes of *amr* and *khilāfa* contained in the letters are clearly present in report B of Bukhārī.

Over the course of time separating Ibn Isḥāq from al-Bukhārī, it is unlikely that the content of the story of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa should have changed significantly. This at least can be seen in the remaining skeleton of the story. However, an *isnād* for the report was newly introduced. This leads us to speculate further that the identities of the two informants did not bother Ibn Isḥāq, since the reliability of the sources was perhaps taken for granted.[26] In addition, al-Balādhurī, who also records the story of the meeting between the two prophets, still followed the style of Ibn Isḥāq, whereas Ibn Saʿd had already endeavoured to give the *isnād* (although not fully). It was only with the full development of *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth* that al-Bukhārī completed the task of giving the full *isnād*.[27]

[26] See also the same theory offered by Juynboll, "Early Islamic Society, as Reflected in Its Use of *Isnāds*" in *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Ḥadīth* (Aldershot: Vorarium, 1996) 192.

[27] Why did al-Bukhārī not mention Ibn Isḥāq in the chain of the transmission?

On the one hand, it can perhaps be concluded that al-Bukhārī relied on another source, one different from that of Ibn Isḥāq. The story, we may speculate, still circulated in different versions within the scholarly circles in Medina, leading us to assume further that it was not the intention of the two scholars to share the same content of the story. On the other hand, one can also speculate that al-Bukhārī took the report from Ibn Isḥāq, particularly the version from the informant of Medina, while suppressing the role of the latter in the transmission.

Yet another question is: Why did al-Bukhārī rely on the Medinan version and ignore the one from Yamāma? To appreciate his motives, we have to position al-Bukhārī among the collectors of *ḥadīths* who relied on the criterion of *thiqa* (trustworthiness). From the *ḥadīth* perspective, the quality of the piety of the informant is what is most important. Thus, the Medinans would have been seen as more reliable than anyone from Yamāma, because the former were certainly closer to the prophetic tradition than the latter, which had clearly become associated with Musaylima, the enemy of Islam.

As regards the two versions of Medina and Yamāma given by Ibn Isḥāq, this may indicate that the *sīra* literature had a more historical orientation than the later *ḥadīth* did. It seems that distance from the event may also have resulted in the different viewpoints of Ibn Isḥāq and al-Bukhārī. It is obvious that Ibn Isḥāq was less distant from the time of Musaylima than al-Bukhārī, and this must have enabled Ibn Isḥāq to locate the people from Yamāma who still had a memory of the story of Musaylima, whereas it would have been harder for Bukhārī to do so.

Additionally, the story of the deputation gives us a glimpse at how the *isnād* was used in Early Muslim scholarship. As indicated above, the *isnād* of the story was attached to the *matn* at a later period, a conclusion which is made clear by the fact that Ibn Isḥāq had simply ignored it. This contradicts Azami's assumption that the "*Isnād* system began in the lifetime of The Prophet and was used by Companions in transmitting the traditions of The Prophet." Furthermore, one may also infer from the above feature on the relation between *sīra* and *ḥadīth* literature in that the deputation story, as an episode in the *sīra*, was later included in the soundest collections of *ḥadīths*. Based on this, one may raise an objection to Azami's statement that "[t]he nature of *sīra*'s work is far from being merely documentary; for this reason the study of *isnād* or *ḥadīth* ought to be carried out in its own literature." See Muḥammad Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, with a Critical Edition of Some Early Text* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001) 246-247.

Besides the stances of al-Bukhārī and Ibn Isḥāq, the works of later scholars reveal more variety. Some scholars accepted only the reports of Ibn Isḥāq, while others relied only on those of al-Bukhārī. Many combined the two sources, whereas others added more reports from Wāqidī, Ibn Saʿd or other previous sources. Finally, we can point to cases where authors introduced their own information and style.

The following scholars—Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1223),[28] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (368/978-463/1070),[29] and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441 H)[30]—based their narration on Ibn Isḥāq only. Al-Maqrīzī, however, cites al-Bukhārī's version in another part of his work.[31] By contrast, al-Balansī (565/1170-613/1237) seems to depend only on al-Bukhārī's accounts,[32] whereas other scholars—including al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348),[33] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350), and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣāliḥī (d. 942 H)[34]—combined the two sources of Ibn Isḥāq and al-Bukhārī. A common feature of the accounts of these scholars is that they simply repeat their sources, adding almost no new information and introducing no new perspective.

One exception to this trend is al-Thaʿālibī (350/961-429/1038), an exceptional scholar in terms of style, particularly in presenting the narrative of the deputation as a dramatic situation. His literary approach is distinct from that of the other authors. Although al-Thaʿālibī essentially relies on the version of Ibn Isḥāq from the Shaykh of Yamāma, he modifies the story by making it more alive and impressive. It reads:

> The deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa came to the Prophet (whom God blesses and to whom He gives peace). Among them was Musaylima, who, indeed, was no way eager to meet him [the Prophet]. They [members of deputation] embraced Islam and, then, wanted to leave. The Prophet ordered that they should be presented gifts, as in other cases of the deputations.
> The Prophet asked: "Anyone from you still left?."
> They answered: "No. Except a man of us who guards our baggage."
> They meant [that he was] Musaylima.

[28] Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965) vol. 2, 298.

[29] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar* vol. 11, 270.

[30] Al-Maqrīzī, *ʿImtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li-l-nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafada wa-l-matāʿ* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Numaysī and Muḥammad Jāmil Ghāzī (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1981) vol. 1, 364-365.

[31] Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafaḍa wa-l-matāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999) vol. 14, 532-534.

[32] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda, Iqtabasa min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970) 56-57.

[33] Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *al-Maghāzī*, 682-685.

[34] Al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā wa-l-rashād fī sīra khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Ibrahīm al-Tarzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUzbawī (Cairo: Wizāra Awkāf, Lajna Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 6, 496-498.

> The Prophet (God blesses and bestows peace upon him) commented: "His position is not worse than yours."
> When the deputation returned to Musaylima and informed him of the sayings of the
> Prophet, he [Musaylima] said to them: "I heard the saying of Muḥammad 'his position is not worse than yours'. Therefore, he has made a partnership with me."
> They remained silent and were not surprised at such an answer.
> It was Rajjāl b. ʿUnfuwwa, after that, who spoke: "O people! A prophet from yourselves is better for you than a prophet not from you. And I testify that Muḥammad had made partnership in authority with him (Musaylima). You should be with him."[35]

Al-Thaʿālibī, it seems, combines the story of the deputation with that of the content of Musaylima's letter, echoing its words: "*innī qad ushriktu fī-l-amr maʿak* (I had been made partner with you in authority)." Rajjāl b. ʿUnfuwwa appears suddenly in the narration. The emergence of this character plays a double role: to make the story more alive by invented dialogue and to stress the important role of Rajjāl in convincing the people to accept the prophethood of Musaylima. Although the characters and the content of the story remain the same as in other books of *tārikh* and *sīra*, the dialogues modified by al-Thaʿālibī may be regarded as his contribution. To put the point differently, the intervention of al-Thaʿālibī in reshaping and restructuring the narration is what makes his contribution distinct from others. This derives from the considerable quality of his literary style.

Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905), on the other hand, offers in his *Tārīkh* a different version of the story, including the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa in his list information on the basis of *qīla* (uncertain). Here he presents two groups: the first group contains a list of deputations and their leaders from various tribes (*wa qadamat ʿalayh wufūd al-ʿarab*...); the second group is placed under the heading of *qīla*, including the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa.[36] Al-Yaʿqūbī even places the tribe at the end of the list, thereby implying that the reports of the second group, compared to the first, did not sufficiently convince the author. This was probably due to the fewer numbers of informants in the sources for the second group than for the first.

Al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), basing his account on the sources used by both Ibn Saʿd[37] and Ibn Isḥāq—i.e., the one deriving from the Shaykh of Yamāma—[38] tells us further that the Prophet provided the delegation with

[35] Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb* 148.

[36] Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964) vol. 2, 68-69.

[37] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Ḥātim (Cairo: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī al-Muaʿassasa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma, 1383/1963) vol. 18, 72-73.

[38] *Nihāyat*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975) vol. 19, 85.

fresh water. They were also summoned to build a mosque in Yamāma, which was later erected on the land of al-Aqʿaṣ b. Maslama. The mosque, it seems, was welcomed by the tribe Ḥanīfa, which mantained its faith in Islam, appointing in addition as caller to prayer Ṭalq b. ʿAlī.

Ibn Ḥubaysh (530/1110-584/1188) adopts a unique position by combining various sources and providing a chronology for the story. He gives details as to why a meeting between Musaylima and Muḥammad did not take place. Firstly, a man from the tribe Ḥanīfa embraced Islam and went to the Prophet to explain that "his faith became better" (*faḥasuna islāmuh*). Then, the Prophet sent the man to persuade Musaylima meet him. When the man attempted to do so, Rajjāl b. ʿUnfuwwa discussed the matter with others in the tribe. Eventually, Rajjāl advised Musaylima: "Do not do this; if you go to him [Muḥammad], he will kill you." Musaylima then sent two emissaries, instead. The story continues that one of them acknowledged only the prophethood of Muḥammad, whereas the other recognized both Muḥammad and Musaylima as prophets. Muḥammad then gave an order to kill the second man, but the Muslims only arrested him. In the end, a Companion persuaded the Prophet to forgive him, saying: "O the Messenger of God! Forgive him for the sake of my father, you and my mother." After this, the Muslims set the man free. The second man then declared the prophethood of Muḥammad alone, as an indication of his repentance. After the death of Muḥammad, the two emissaries went home to Yamāma. However, the emissary who had been saved from execution committed a sinful deed by spreading slanderous gossip (*fatana*) about his colleague. He was finally killed together with Musaylima, to whom he had remained faithful, in the Battle of Yamāma.[39]

The report of Ibn Ḥubaysh seems to combine the following events, blending them into a single narration: 1) Muḥammad sent an emissary to Musaylima; 2) Musaylima, in return, sent two emissaries to Muḥammad; 3) the delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa came to Medina; 4) the emissaries of Musaylima returned to Yamāma; and 5) the traitor of Medina was killed in the Battle of Yamāma.

The report also offers a unique perspective in presenting the narration. Instead of starting the report by giving the list of Arab deputations to Medina as per convention, it uses the story of the man from Yamāma who converted to Islam and relates this account to subsequent events.

In terms of quantity, the longest story of the deputation is that of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), who combines all previous reports from Ibn Isḥāq, al-Wāqidī (through the recension of Ibn Saʿd in *Ṭabaqāt*), al-Bukhārī , al-Suhaylī (508-81/1114-85-581/1185), and many others. However, Ibn

[39] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt* vol. 1, 54. The author assigns the authority to al-Wāqidī; see also al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 60-61; al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ* vol. 14, 231. The story recalls those of two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. They are called Ibn Nawwāḥa and Ibn ʿUthāl or Wabar b. Mushahhar; see the discussion on this in chapter two earlier.

Kathīr offers no assesement as to the reliability of the sources,[40] his main contribution lies in his enormous effort in collecting, combining, and arranging the avaliable sources. Al-ʿAynī, too, offers almost the same quantity of reports as Ibn Kathīr, but al-ʿAynī provides criticism and evaluation of the sources.

In some ways, Ibn Kathīr's account marks the beginning of a period of stagnation in Muslim historical literature, which was partly marked by the growing tendency to accept classical reports without any reservation and to treat them as both historical and theological truth. There was henceforth no originality in terms of the manner, attitude, or method of scholars in presenting the story of Musaylima. One can still find this tendency in the works of even more recent scholars, such as those of Muḥammad Khuḍarī,[41] Ibrāhīm Ḥarakāt,[42] or Khalīl ʿAbd al-Karīm.[43] Most modern writers repeat the simple version of the story concerning the coming of Musaylima to Medina[44] or merely repeat the classical reports, failing to apply any new analysis.

Paradigmatic Deputation

The majority of Muslim scholars have interpreted the Arab deputations to Medina at the end of Muḥammad's lifetime as signifying both political and religious acceptance of the Medinan authority.[45] Thus, the year 9-10 H came to be known in Muslim historical literature as the year of the deputations, and interpreted as the submission of the Arab tribes to Islam.

By contrast, some Western scholars have cast doubt on the historical value of the stories of the deputations. They, instead, regard the tradition as the result of a later elaboration of *sīra* and *tārīkh* literature. For example, in the words of Watt, "[t]he supposed deputations of all the tribes and their conversion are largely pious inventions to magnify the achievement of Muḥammad (and perhaps to minimize that of Abū Bakr)."[46] Moreover, the Islamization of the Arabian Peninsula, Watt suspects, started from the time of the Apos-

[40] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* vol. 5, 48-52.

[41] Muḥammad Khudarī, *Dawla al-umawiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Ḥadīth, 1989) 211; idem, *Itmām al-wafā' fī Sīrat al-khulafā'* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thaqāfiyya, 1402/1982) 28.

[42] *Al-Siyāsa wa-l-mujtamaʿ fī ʿaṣr al-rāshidīn* (Beirut: al-Ahliyya li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1985) 23.

[43] *Dawla yathrib, baṣā'ir fī ʿām al-wufūd wa fī akhbārih* (Beirut: Sīnā li Nashr, 1999) 155-165.

[44] For the summary of the accounts of deputations to Medina, see, for instance, Abū al-Fidā', *Kitāb al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Kāmil al-Zayn and Adīb ʿĀrif al-Zayn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1375/1956) vol. 2, 65; ʿAlī Aḥmadī, *Kitāb makātib al-rasūl* (n.p.: n.d.) vol. 1, 167.

[45] See Ḥamīdullah, *Le Prophète de l'Islam* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1959) vol. 1, 433-434. For more on Muslim scholars who subscribe to the above view, such as M. H. Haykal, Shukri Faysal, M. al-Khaduri, see Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 12. n. 4.

[46] Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 80; Dale F. Eickelman, "Musaylima. An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia" *JESHO* 10 (1967) 35.

tasy War onwards. Shoufani supports this position, concluding further that no single element of the tribe Ḥanīfa had been Islamized during the lifetime of the Prophet.[47]

As regards the case of the delegation of the tribe Tamīm, for instance, W. Arafat suspects likewise that "it is perhaps most likely that the story or stories of the visit of the Tamīmis, as we have them now, are the product of later years."[48] As a result, some elements of the accounts of the delegation must have been fabricated in the later period. According to Arafat, the poems of Hassān b. Thābit, addressed to the delegation, were also forged.[49]

The practice of Arab genealogy was another key factor in the political and religious sphere from the time of Islam's birth to the early Abbasid era.[50] An already complex discipline, it became even more so when the Persian nobility also began playing a political role under the Abbasids.[51] The sayings attributed to al-Ma'mūn indicate the declining role of the supremacy of pure Arab descent, such as: "[t]hus a noble Arab is closer to a noble Persian than he is to low-class Arab; a noble Persian is nearer to a noble Arab than he is to a low-class Persian."[52] This is also in line with Enderwitz's observation that "*[d]aher muss man die erst gegen Ende des 8.Jhdts. unter den kuttab entstehende, elitär gegenüber den Arabern den persischen Superioritätsanspruch vertretende*

[47] See Shoufani, *al-Riddah* 28-32.

[48] W. Arafat, "An Interpretation of the Different Accounts of the Visit Tamīm Delegation to The Prophet in A. H. 9" *BSOAS* 17 (1955) 424.

[49] Arafat "An Interpretation" 425. Arafat puts it: "One may be bold enough to guess that they may be the first two lines of Poem No. xxv in the *Diwan*, or perhaps even the first line only."

Kister, however, disagrees with Arafat, saying that "[u]nfortunately Arafat did not analyse this verse. The conclusion of Arafat is, however, not acceptable as far as this verse is concerned." Kister, instead, points to the supposed relationship of the Tamīm with the Quraysh even in the pre-Islamic period. The alliance between the tribes, according to Kister, consisted mainly in the sharing of guardianship of the administration of the sanctuary of Mecca. Similarly, the role of the Tamīm in the economic sector, such as in the market of Uqāz, cannot be neglected. Unsurprisingly, there were even intermarriages between both tribes. See Kister, "Mecca and Tamim (Aspects of their Relations)" *JESHO* 3, 2 (1965) 148.

Supporting Kister, Landau-Tasseron presents the the stages of the redaction of the story of the delegation of the Tamīm in the various accounts of Early Muslim works, especially those of Ibn Isḥāq and Wāqidī. It was there that the process of differentiation and combination of reports from many sources took place. She explains: "[t]he historical material underwent considerable changes not only as a result of tendentious forgeries but also through the mere process of redaction, which was for the most part carried out in good faith. See Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Processes of Redaction: The Case of the Tamīmite Delegation to The Prophet Muḥammad" *BSOAS* 49 (1986) 270.

[50] I. Goldziher, *Muḥammadanishe Studien* (Halle: Max Niemayer, 1889) vol. 1, 97-98.

[51] More discussion on the theme, see, for instance, Micheal G. Morony, "Social Elite in Iraq and Iran: After the Conquest" in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, VI: Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. John Haldon and Lawrence I. Conrad (New Jersey: Darwin Press, 2004) 275-284.

[52] Trans. Kister, "Notes on Caskel's *Ǧamharat an-Nasab*" in *Society and Religion from Jahiliyya to Islam* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1990) 50.

"su'ubiya" in Zusammenhang mit Veränderungen innerhalb der Gesamtgesellschaft betrachten."[53]

The story of the deputations can be related to the use of the legitimacy of genealogy in politics. Mentioning certain tribes in the delegation story may have been meant to emphasize the role of the tribes in the contemporary political realm at the time of constructing the *sīra*, i.e., Ibn Isḥāq's. In other words, the inclusion of the tribes in the delegation story seemed to justify their role in contemporary politics, an effort that was intended to highlight the fact that they had submitted to Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet.

The shift in the relation between genealogy and politics evolved gradually. During the years of the rightly guided caliphs, the identity of early Muslims was simply based on their origins as either Meccans (*Muhājirūn*) or Medinans (*Anṣār*). This can be seen from the election of Abū Bakr, who benefited from the fact that the people of Quraysh enjoyed more privileges than did the *Anṣār* tribes.[54] However, it was not long before more complex various tribal relations began to affect politics. In later decades, the role of the emotional bond of tribal origin behind the numerous civil wars could not be ignored. For instance, in the war of Ṣiffīn between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya, Muḍār and Tamīm were in the side of Muʿāwiya, whereas Rabīʿa—ʿAbd al-Qays, Bakr, Taghlīb, and Ḥanīfa—were all on the side of ʿAlī.[55]

It is true that alliances and splits among the tribes could be dynamic, even to the point where changes to Muʿāwiya's pedigree, for example, took place.[56] Nevertheless, Eickelman subscribes to the view that the tribal structure of the Arabs did not change considerably between pre- and early Islamic times.[57] Hence, one may argue further that, even down to the Abbasid revolution the tribal alliances of the Arabs played a considerable role in the shift in power.[58]

For this reason, the stories of delegations from these tribes presenting themselves during the lifetime of the Prophet indicated not only their historical importance at the time but also their continuing role in the political realm under the Umayyads and early Abbasids. This assumption is justified by the fact that the stories of the deputations (*wufūd*) appear in *sīra* and *tārīkh* literature in the lifetime of the Prophet, the guided caliphs and the Umayyads.

[53] *Gesellschaftlicher Rang und ethnische Legitimation. Der arabische Schriftsteller Abū ʿUṯmān al-Ǧāḥiẓ über die Afrikaner, Perser und Araber in der islamischen Gesellschaft* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1979) 15.

[54] W. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 30-31; see also Shoufani, *al-Riddah* 51-54.

[55] W. Madelung, *The Succession* 229 and 232; idem, "Rabīʿa in the Jahiliyya and in Early Islam" *JSAI* 28 (2003) 155-157, 162, 164, and 232.

[56] See Kister, "Notes on Caskel's" 64-65.

[57] Eickelman, "Musaylima" 22.

[58] See, for instance, Khālid Yaḥyā Blankinship "The Tribal Factor in the Abbasid Revolution: the Betrayal of the Imām Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad" *JAOS* 108 (1988) 589-603.

Thus, the theme may also be considered as a *topos*, i.e., the same narration appearing in many contexts. In illustration we can point to the list furnished by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (246/860-328/940) of some 40 such delegations.[59]

According to Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, eleven delegations came to Muʿāwiya, whereas only nine approached to the Prophet. In attributing more delegations to Muʿāwiya, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, it seems, was trying to raise the profile of the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. This is not surprising though, as Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih was an official poet of the Marwānids of Cordova, a dynasty that considered itself as a continuation of the Umayyads in Damascus. By contrast, al-Mubarrad (210/826-286/900), a Basrian scholar at the time of the Abbasids, reports that only two delegations approached to Muʿāwiya: one from the *ahl kitāb*[60] and the other consisting in an emissary from Rome.[61]

It is also interesting that Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih makes no mention of the tribe of Ḥanīfa visiting to the Prophet Muḥammad by the year 9-10 H. When he does report their arrival, he places this event in the caliphate of Abū Bakr, in the year 12 H. to be exact, i.e., after the Battle of Yamāma. In this regard, not only does Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih contradict the majority of the authors of *tārīkh* and *sīra*, he also denies the occurence of any meeting between the two prophets, Muḥammad and Musaylima.

Surprising Appearance

In reading the story of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa to Medina given in various reports, one may find the sudden appearance of the claimant of prophethood from Yamāma a bit surprising. Indeed, the encounter of the two prophets is depicted as unanticipated. More mysterious is the tradition describing Musaylima as covered with the garment.

Whether or not the story has any reliability, the communication between the two Prophets as it has come down to us is a case of anything but an ideal speech situation, lacking as it does in reciprocal understanding. Musaylima demands the "succession" of the "authority" or "*khilāfa*," whereas the answer from Muḥammad is in almost the same tone as Musaylima's letter, different only in its tone of rejection. Similarly, in another account reported by Ḥākim, Musaylima demands that Muhammad confirm his prophethood, but

[59] Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *Kitāb al-iqd al-farid*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn, Aḥmad al-Zayn, and Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa al-Ṭālib wa Tarjama wa Nashr, 1375/1965) vol. 2, 4-119, see also the list of headings pp. 580-581. The delegations are as follows: 6 pre-Islamic Arabic deputations; nine deputations to Muḥammad; four to ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb; one deputation to Abū Bakr; four to Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān; four to ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān; three to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Azīz; one deputation to Ibn Zubayr; one deputation to Abū Muslim; one deputation to al-Maʾmūn; one deputation to al-Wāthiq; and seven to Muʿāwiya.

[60] Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm and Sayyid Shaḥḥāṭa (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa) Vol. 3, 233-234.

[61] Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 114.

the latter swears instead that Musaylima's people will be destroyed. The meeting results not in an agreement between the two prophets but in sharpening the differences.

From communication with Musaylima to representation, the story of Musaylima's involvement in the deputation of his tribe never disappeared from Muslim literature. The narration grew, shrank, decreased, and increased. The contributions of many narrators have obviously contaminated the story.[62] Although most later scholars based their narration on Ibn Isḥāq, one can spot differences among them, with some stressing certain parts of the story and others focusing on different one. Thus, there are found many versions, featuring different aspects of the story—be they the main idea, its beginning, or its end.

The identity of Musaylima in the story of his meeting with Muḥammad is unclear, except that he is depicted to have been an average member of the deputation of the tribe of Ḥanīfa to Medina. However, later Muslim scholars provided the full pedigree of Musaylima, to which the next chapter will proceed.

[62] For more role of the narrators in transmitting tradition, see, e.g. also Sebastian Günther, "Modern Literary Theory Applied to Classical Arabic Texts, Ḥadīth Revisited" in *Understanding Near Eastern Literature, A Spectrum of Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Verena Klemm and Beatrice Gruendler (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2000) 170-176.

Chapter Six

Unearthing the Identity of the Prophet from Yamāma

"Many *shaykhs* from Yamāma told me that
Musaylima, the arch-liar, was short [in stature], pale [in color],
pugnosed, flat-nosed, and called Abū Thumāma."
(al-Balādhurī)[1]

As presented in chapter five, Musaylima's function in the deputation story remains obscure, since he plays no significant role other than an average participant. The leader of the deputation was Salmā b. Ḥanẓala al-Suhaymī, according to Ibn Saʿd. In fact, Musaylima b. Ḥabīb, as a simple individual, did not attract the attention of Ibn Isḥāq, al-Wāqidī, al-Balādhurī, or al-Yaʿqūbī. In this chapter I look at the various ancestral pedigrees of Musaylima in classical Muslim literature. A brief account of classical Yamāma, including its politics, religion, and economy, will also be offered.

Pedigree and Portayals

Various versions of the pedigree attributed to Musaylima by Muslim authors appear as follows:

Ibn Isḥāq	: Musaylima b. Ḥabīb (through the transmission of Ibn Hishām and Ṭabarī).
Balādhurī	: Musaylima b. Ḥabīb, al-Kadhdhāb, Thumāma b. Kabīr b. Ḥabīb.[2]

[1] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 109.

[2] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* vol. 1, 103.

Al-Wāqidī	: Musaylima b. Ḥabīb.[3]
Ibn Saʿd	: Musaylima b. Ḥabīb.
Ibn Hishām	: Musaylima b. Thumāma.
Al-Kalbī	: Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb b. Thumāma b. Kabīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. Abd al-Ḥārith.[4]
Al-Masʿūdī	: Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb b. Thumāma b. Kathīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. ʿAdī b. Ḥanīfa. His kunya (surname) is Abū Thumāma.[5]
Al-Thaʿālibī	: Abū Thumāma Musaylima b. Ḥabīb al-Ḥanafī.
Ibn Ḥazm	: Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb b. Thumāma b. Kathīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. ʿAdī b. Ḥanīfa. His kunya (surname) is Abū Thumāma.[6]
Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr	: Musaylima b. Ḥabīb. His *kunya* is Abū Hārūn.[7]
Al-Suhaylī	: Musaylima b. Thumāma b. Kabīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. Haffān b. Dhūhl b. al-Dūl b. Ḥanīfa. Nicknames: Abū Hārūn, Abu Thumāma, Raḥmān. Musaylima, it is said, used the name Raḥmān before the birth of ʿAbdalla, Muḥammad's father.[8]
Al-Maqrīzī I	: Musaylima b. Thumāma b. Kabīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. ʿAdī.[9]
Al-Maqrīzī II	: Abū Thumāma Musaylima b. Kathīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. ʿAdī b. Ḥanīfa b. Lujaym b. Saʿb b. ʿAlī b. Bakr b. Wāʾil b. Qāsiṭ b. Hayt b. ʿAfṣā b. Daʿmā b. Jadīla b. Asad b. Rabīʿa al-Kurshī b. Niẓār b. Maʿd b. Adnān.[10]
Al-Kalāʿī	: Maslama b. Ḥabīb, nickname Abū Thumāma.[11]

3 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda, riwāya aḥmad b. muḥammad b. aʿtham al-kūfī* (d. 314), ed. Yaḥyā al-Juburī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990/1410) 108.

4 Al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab li ibn al-kalbī*, ed. Maḥmūd Firdaws al-ʿAẓim and Maḥmūd Fakhūrī (Damascus: Dār al-Yaqḍa al-ʿArabiyya) vol. 2, 269.

5 Al-Masʿūdi, *al-Tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf* , ed. ʿAbdalla Ismāʿīl al-Ṣāwī (Baghdad: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1357/1938) 239.

6 *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿarab lī abī muḥammad ʿalī b. saʿīd b. ḥazm al-andalūsī*, ed. É. Lévi Provençal (Cairo: al-Maʿārif, 1948) 292.

7 Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa siyar*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr, 1386/1966) 270.

8 Al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unūf fī Tafsīr al-sīra al-nabawiyya li ibn hishām*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Rawf Saʿd (Cairo: Maktaba al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, n.d.) vol. 4, 225.

9 Al-Maqrīzī, *ʿImtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li-l-nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafada wa-l-matāʿ* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Numaysī and Muḥammad Jāmil Ghāzī (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1981) vol. 1, 364-5.

10 Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafaḍa wa-l-matāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999) vol. 14, 528, 229. It seems that the editor of this edition provides the lengthy pedigree of Musaylima.

11 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda, iqtabasah min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970) 56, n. 1.

Ibn Khaldūn	: Musaylima b. Thumāma b. Kathīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥarth b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. ʿĀdī.[12]
Ibn Kathīr	: Musaylima b. Thumāma b. Kathīr b. Ḥabīb b. al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd al-Ḥārith b. Hamāz b. Dhahl b. al-Zūl b. Ḥanīfa. He is called as Abū Thumāma, Abū Harūn, al-Raḥmān, or Raḥmān al-Yamāma.[13]
Diyārbakrī	: Hārūn, Abu Thumāma as *kunya* (surname), and Musaylima as *laqab* (nickname).[14]
Zurqānī	: Thumāma, Musaylima as *laqab*, based on Wathīma's information found in his *Kitāb al-Ridda*.[15]

It is noteworthy that some scholars modified and added certain names to the pedigree in the later development of this genealogy. New nicknames attributed to Musaylima also appeared. Equally interesting is al-Diyārbakrī (d. 960/1550 or 990/1582), who provides a different name for Musaylima, i.e., Hārūn. In addition, the weriter depicts the subject as evil in character and terrible in appearance.[16]

In addition to the above pedigrees, the figure of Musaylima is being further portrayed as an absolute antagonist, with a complete physical description of Musaylima as having a pale face, a flattened nose, and small pair of legs (*aṣfara al-wajh, afṭaʾa al-anf, daqīq al-sāqayn*).[17] According to Diyārbakrī, "He [Musaylima] is foul in temperament, awful in image his personality is in [direct] contrast to that of the Messenger of God, Muḥammad."[18]

For al-Ṭabarī, however, Musaylima also had his good points: "*Kāna musaylima yasānī kulla aḥad wa yataʿallafuh wa lā yubālī an yaṭṭallaʿ al-ās minh ʿalā qabīh*...(Musaylima used to treat everyone gently and be amicable with him, and it did not occur to the people to know evil from him)."[19]

[12] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh ibn khaldūn al-musammā bi kitāb al-ʿibar wa diwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar wa min ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa, 1355/1936) vol. 2, 106.

[13] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 5, 50. See also his *al-Sīra al-Nabawīya* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1966) vol. 4, 95.

[14] Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khāmis fī aḥwāl anfas nafīs* (Beirut: Muʿassasa Shaʿbān, n.d.) vol. 2, 157.

[15] Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ ʿalā-l-mawāhib al-laduniyya li-l-ʿallāma al-qasṭallānī* (Cairo: al-Azhar, 1327H) vol. 4, 19.

[16] Al-Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khāmis* vol. 2, 157.

[17] Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-l-athar*, ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ṣalāḥ b. Muḥammad b. ʿUwayḍa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1418/1998) vol. 3, 409.

[18] Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khāmis* vol. 2, 157.

[19] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 282; *The History of Ṭabarī vol. x, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. Fred M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 107.

Many Western scholars, on the other hand, have tended to dispute even the name of Musaylima,[20] holding that Musaylima was not the man's real name but a contemptuous diminutive form of Maslama. However, Watt disagrees and insists that Musaylima was the original name, simply reflecting a diminutive pattern commonly used by the Arabs, such as Ṭulayha or Khuwaylid. Watt also contends that this element did not form part of Musaylima's name, pointing out that al-Raḥmān appears to have been the name of his God, not of the prophet himself. Based on his claim to have received the revelation from al-Raḥmān, he might well have been called ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (the servant of the Merciful).[21]

Life and Prophethood

While the date of Musaylima's birthdate is uncertain, it is known that he was born in a place called Haddar.[22] Then he moved to al-Ḥajr, the capital of Yamāma, where he gained more popularity due to his prophetic activities.

Another central question that remains is when exactly Musaylima declared himself a prophet. According to Ibn Isḥāq, as reported by Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī, it was after the deputation, before the end of the year 10 H, and therefore almost at the end of Muḥammad's life. Al-Ṭabārī reports that "When the Prophet returned to Medina after performing the Pilgrimage of Completion (*ḥajjat al-tamām*), he began to complain of illness. As travel was allowed, the news of the Prophet's illness spread. Both al-Aswad and Musaylima leapt at [the opportunity to claim prophethood]—the former in Yemen and the latter in Yamāma, and their news reached the Prophet. After the Prophet had recovered, Ṭulayḥa leapt at [the opportunity to claim prophethood] in the land of the tribe Asad. Then in Muḥarram the Prophet complained of the pain from which he died."[23]

[20] F. R. Buhl, "Musailima," *EI*[1], vol. 4, 745; Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present*, 9th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1967) 141; D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, 3rd ed. (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927) 454; Muarice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Mahomet* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1969) 196; John Bagot Glubb, *The Great Arab Conquests* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964) 109; Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 6; Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971) 67. Interestingly, Rodinson uses the name of Maslama—instead of Musaylima—consistently throughout his work work.

[21] Watt, "Musaylima" in *EI*[2]; idem, *Muḥammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 134.

[22] Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002); Ibn Manẓūr, "Haddar" in *Lisān al-ʿArab*. See also Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth* vol. 5, 217. Haddar was renowned as a valley, located in the district of al-Falaj. This valley, where plenty of water could be found, was known for its fertility; see Abdullah al-Askar, *al-Yamama in the Early Islamic Era* (Reading: Ithaca, 2002) 15. It is also reported that Musaylima owned a farm in Haddar and in Abadh. *Ibid* 45, cf. Yaqūt, *Muʿjam* vol. 4, 258 and vol. 5, 258.

[23] *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 147; *The Last Years of The Prophet vol. ix*, trans. Ismail K. Poonawala (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 107-8. [modification mine]

The majority of the later scholars—such as Diyārbakrī, al-Maqrīzī, and al-Balansī—accepted the dating.[24] Moreover, al-Yaʿqūbī even says that Musaylima had already embraced Islam, before claiming to be a prophet by the end of the year 10 (*wa kāna qad aslama thumma tanabbaʾa*).[25] This view, al-Zurqānī explains further, is based on Ibn Isḥāq's account of the deputation from the Shaykh of Yamāma.[26] In addition, al-Maqrīzī simplifies matters by stating that "*wa iddaʿa annah sharīk rasūl allāh ṣallā allāh ʿalayh wa sallam, fa attabaʿah banū ḥanīfa* ([Musaylima] proclaimed that he is really a partner of the messenger of God—may God bless and bestow peace upon him—in prophethood, and the tribe Ḥanīfa followed him)."[27] The majority of modern Muslim historians, such as Balyuzi, accept the later dating.[28]

By contrast, al-Wāqidī offers an earlier dating, as the name of al-Raḥmān of Musaylima was known in the early Medinan period. The report reads:

> It was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf who told the story as follows: I prepared my armor on the day of Badr with other people, where ʿUmayya b. Khalāf—a friend of mine since the days of Jāhiliyya [encountered me]. I had been named ʿAbd ʿAmr, but when Islam came, I was called ʿAbd al-Raḥmān . [Suddenly] he [ʿUmayya] called me: "O, ʿAbd ʿAmr." I did not, however, answer him [immediately], before he explained, "I did not call you ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, because Musaylima in Yamāma had also been known as al-Raḥmān. Therefore, I do not call your name like his." He then called me ʿAbd al-Ilāh....[29]

Al-Thaʿālibī also gives an earlier dating, stating: "*iddaʿa al-nubuwwa wa rasūl allāh ṣallā allāh ʿalayh wa sallam bi makka qabl al-hijra* ([Musaylima] claimed prophethood and the Messenger of God (may God bless and give peace upon him) in Mecca prior to Hijra)." However, the claim remained secret and was not made public until much later. This was due to the fact that Musaylima's position among his own people was sometimes strong and sometimes weak; some believed in him, while others mocked him.[30] Only a few, al-Wāqidī also reports, believed in the prophethood of Musaylima, (*wa āmanū binubuwwatih illā al-qalīl minhum*).[31]

24 Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 158; Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 58.

25 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 120.

26 Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 20: "*Annahu kāna aslama...*"

27 Maqrizi, *Imtāʿ* vol. 1, 365.

28 H. M. Balyuzi, *Muḥammad and the Course of Islam* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1976) 148. For him, Musaylima "...ostensibly became a Muslim."

29 *Kitāb al-Maghāzī al-Wāqidī*, ed. Marsden Jones (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) vol. 1, 82.

30 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 146.

31 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb Ridda* 109.

In the middle ground between these the two opposing opinions stand Ibn Shiḥna[32] and later Abū al-Fidā', who subscribe to the view that before he made contact with Muḥammad, Musaylima had already claimed the prophethood independently in Yamāma.[33]

Western scholars also hold various opinions. D. S. Margoliouth, for instance, believes that Musaylima started his religious preaching before Muḥammad. Margoliouth even further speculates that "there is suspicion that he [Muḥammad] is the imitator rather than the imitated."[34] However, Eickelman is critical of this position, saying that "...he took an extreme (and arbitrary) interpretation of *Sura* XXV: 60 and al-Baghāwī's commentary on it, and maintained that Muḥammad modeled his early *Suras* upon Musaylima's."

According to Watt, however, the report of al-Wāqidī is rather "doubtful and it contradicts other reports." Watt goes further, saying that "whatever Musaylima's past religious practices and experiences may have been, he did not attain any wide public notice in his own tribe, still less beyond it, until after the death of Hawdha."[35] Eickelmann supports this position.[36] By contrast, Kister, based on the reports of al-Wāqidī and al-Tha'ālibī, insists that Musaylima's claim to prophethood predated the reports of Ibn Isḥāq.[37]

Moreover, Musaylima, it is also reported, had been called Raḥmān al-Yamāma before 'Abdalla, Muḥammad's father, was even born. As far as the early prophetic activities of Musaylima were concerned, some authors suggest that the attribution of al-Raḥmān to him, coming before Muḥammad's prophethood, explained the Meccans's contempt for the latter, especially as al-Raḥmān was contained in the *Basmallah* (*Bi ism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*).[38] Although al-Askar rejects the suggestion that the term al-Raḥmān implied a certain religious connection between Musaylima and Muḥammad, he does maintain that the term was linked with Musaylima from as early as the Meccan period. Indeed, Musaylima had perhaps started his activities as soothsayer (*kāhin*) before becoming a tribal leader of Ḥanīfa. However, in that period the main threat to Muḥammad's mission remained the Meccans; Musaylima was too far away to cause any serious danger. Muḥammad, therefore, paid no serious attention to the activities of Musaylima. In addition, the Prophet

32 Ibn Shiḥna, *Rawḍ al-manāẓir fi 'ilm al-awā'il wa-l-awākhir*, ed. Muḥammad Muhannā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1417/1998) 101.

33 Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Alī, *Kitāb al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Kāmil al-Zayn and Adīb 'Ārif al-Zayn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1375/1956) vol. 2, 65.

34 "On the Origin and Import of the name Muslim and Ḥanīf, *JRAS* 35 (1903), 485. see also C. J. Lyall, "The words *ḥanīf* and Muslim," *JRAS* 35 (1903), 771-84; F. Buhl, "Musailima," *EI*[1].

35 Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina*, 135.

36 Dale F. Eickelman, "Musaylima. An Approach to the Social Anthropology of Seventh Century Arabia" *JESHO* 10 (1967) 33.

37 "The Struggle against Musaylima" 4-6.

38 Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ*, vol. 4, 20; al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unūf*, vol. 4, 225. See also our discussion in chapter four earlier.

still took into account the economic dependence of Mecca on Yamāma, i.e. in terms of the food supplies, which meant that any embargo by the people of Yamāma had to be avoided. It was only during the Medinan period, Askar explains, that the Prophet realized the power of Musaylima and deemed him the arch-liar.[39]

As regards the story of the deputation, al-Suhaylī reports that, while in Medina, Musaylima stopped by the house of his former wife, named Kaysa or Zaynab bt. al-Ḥārith b. Kurayz b. Ḥabīb b. ʿAbd al-Shams. Having broken from Musaylima, she had then married ʿAbdalla b. ʿĀmir.[40] However, al-Zurqānī (d. 1122/1710), a commentator on al-Qasṭalānī, counters that the former wife of Musaylima (whom he calls Kaysa bt. al-Ḥārith) never lived in Medina. Instead, she remained in Yamāma even after the death of her second husband, and then married her own nephew, named ʿAbdalla b. ʿĀmir.[41] Complicated as this sounds, al-Zurqānī's correction came approximately four centuries after the event. This is not to mention the earlier version of al-ʿAyni, in which the wife's name is given as Ramla.

Musaylima, Askar explains further, might have visited Mecca in the early prophethood of Muḥammad. Some support for this is provided by the account of his marriage with the woman from that city. In addition, to visit Mecca was not unusual for the people of Yamāma, as they were drawn there by the sanctuary of the Kaʿba. However, Askar casts doubt on the possibility of any previous contact between Muḥammad and Musaylima, despite the fact that many early Western scholars suspected a religious connection already existed between the two prophets.

Musaylima is also said to have married in addition a certain Sajāḥ Umm Ṣādir bt. Awsir b. Ḥiqq b. Usāma.[42] This story is no less complicated in the literature than that of Kaysa (on whose story, see chapter five earlier). Indeed, the account of the marriage seems almost designed to ridicule the couple, as both were designated false prophets—at once a sign of the weakness of Musaylima's political leadership and of his immorality. The marriage, it is said, was motivated by political interests: Musaylima was driven to it when Sajāḥ, from the tribe Tamīm, marched at the head of an army into the territory of the tribe Ḥanīfa. What happened next sounds like a conflation of this story with that of the delegation and letter to Muḥammad. It said that Musaylima came to Sajāḥ, trying to negotiate a division of the land of Arabia into two:

39 Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 79-84 (see also chapter eight below).

40 Al-Suhaylī, *Rawḍ al-ʿunūf* vol. 4, 226. See also Ib Ḥazm, *Jamharat* 68. See also Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muhabbar* ed. Ilse Lichtenstädter (Beirut: Dāʾira al-Maʿārif, 1361/1942) 440. According to Al-Askar, Musaylima's wife was called Kabsha; see his *al-Yamama* 86.

41 Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 19; Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ wa-l-asmāʾ*, vol. 14, 535, n. 1.

42 Al-Kalbī, *Jamharat* vol. 1, 220. Her name was Sajāḥ b. Mundhir, according to al-Wāqidī in his *Kitāb* 111.

half for Musaylima and the other half for Sajāḥ.[43] In addition, al-Masʿūdī also cites a poem lampooning the engagement of Musaylima and Sajāḥ.[44]

Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, quotes lustful rhymes attributed to Musaylima, dating from his sexual affair with Sajāḥ (for the complete text, see stanza *Creation* F in chapter nine below). The preservation of this scurrilous verse suggests that the narrators saw Musaylima as an essentially immoral enemy. There is blatant propaganda behind the story, resulting in total distortion of the figure of the subject.

There is little debate over the fact of Musaylima's death during the Battle of Yamāma in Rabīʿ al-Awwal 12 H. What remains enigmatic are his birthdate, age, religious teaching, character, and much more. Centuries after his death, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Suyūṭī, al-Suhaylī, al-Zurqānī, al-Anṣāri and Ibn Kathīr all fueled the myth by insisting that Musaylima was 150 years old, placing him among the *muʿammarūn* (long-lived).[45] Interestingly, one twentieth century writer still took it for granted and understood the meaning literally.[46] This leads us to further conclude that the process of myth-making in the case of Musaylima, extending from the time of Ibn Isḥāq up to now, has never ceased.

Locating Yamāma

> "I have dreamed that, indeed, I am migrating from Mecca
> to the land, where there are date-palms;
> [this vision] comes and goes and it is Yamāma,..."
> (Prophet Muḥammad)[47]

Yamāma, in the narration of Musaylima's career, plays a central role, similar in fact to that of Mecca and Medina in the case of Muḥammad and Islam. This region was the homeland, the locus of his declaration, the center of his prophetic mission, and the site of his death and burial.

Despite some differences among classical and modern geographers over the location and specific boundaries of classical Yamāma,[48] it is safe to say

[43] *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 271-274; trans. Donner, *History* 92-95. See also chapter one above.

[44] Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādan al-jawhar*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Din ʿAbd al-Ḥāmīd ([Cairo]: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyayh al-Kubrā, 1377/1958) vol. 2, 310.

[45] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh* vol. 2; al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 20; al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-ʿunūf*, vol. 4, 225; Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Muḍī*, ed. Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudīr (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 2, 348; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, vol. 5, 50.

[46] For example, see Aḥmad Saʿīd b. Salām, *Ḥurūb al-ridda wa bināʾ al-dawla al-islāmiyya* (Haliyubulis: Dār al-Manār, 1994) 92 and 135.

[47] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Ruʾyā* 5, vol. 2, 981-982.

[48] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 7-13; Hasan M. Al-Naboodah, "Arabia" in *Medieval Islamic Civilization, an Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri (New York: Routledge, 2006) vol. 1, 55.

that the region corresponds to the one surrounding modern-day Riyāḍ. There can still be found a region known as Yamāma in central Najd, about 70 km south-east of al-Riyāḍ, near the station Mahaṭṭat al-Kharj on the way from al-Riyāḍ to al-Zahrān.[49] However, it should be borne in mind that the current Yamāma seems likely to have been smaller than the classical one, since the name originally designated a much larger area, comparable to Ḥijāz. We do know that the journey from Mecca to Yamāma in Muḥammad's era would have taken four days on foot or by camel.[50]

Nor is there any material trace of Musaylima at all in the whole region. Let alone the fact that he has no followers today, there is no archeological evidence that would allow us to reconstruct Musaylima's life, although the same can be said even of Muḥammad's career in Mecca and Medina.[51] In addition, the position of Yamāma in Muslim literature is not as significant as that of Damascus, Baghdad, Kūfa, or Baṣra. The latter cities played major roles in the early development of Muslim society, whereas Yamāma became something of a backwater.

In view of this relative silence, the following sections explore the situation of Yamāma before Islam and after its annexation by Medina, in terms of its economy, religion, and politics.

Regional Politics Prior to Islam

Yamāma, which literally refers to 'a wild dove,'[52] was also known as al-Jaww and al-ʿArūd.[53] In Arabian mythology the name was derived from a princess, Yamāma bt. Shams b. Ṭasm, who is said to have been crucified by a ruler named ʿAbd Kulāl. The ancient dwellers of Yamāma, namely the Ṭasm and Jādis people, al-Ṭabarī explains, often came into conflicts.

The princess Yamāma apparently had a miraculous vision that enabled her to see the enemy even from far away. It is said that the princess had already warned the people before Hassān b. Ṭubbaʿ, a leader of Himyar, marched on Yamāma. But they failed to heed her advice, which arrogance resulted in the

[49] G. R. Smith, "Yamāma" in *EI*².

[50] Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-Aʿshā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1015 H.) vol. 5, 119.

[51] F. E Peters writes: "Given the absence of any conclusive archeological evidence for Ḥijāzi piety." See his, "Introduction" in ed. F. E. Peters, *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) xxviii; cf. Yehuda D. Nevo, "Towards a Prehistory of Islam" *JSAI* 17 (1994) 108-41; idem and Judith Koren, "The origins of the Muslim Descriptions of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary" *JNES* 49 (1990) 23-44. See also Jeremy Johns, "Archeology and the history of early Islam: the first seventy years" *JESHO* 46 (2003) 433: "It is particularly frustrating that there has been no archeological investigation of the Arabian environment traditionally associated with the life of The Prophet and the early development of Islam."

[52] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1376/1957) vol. 5, 441.

[53] Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-aʿshā* vol. 5, 58.

devastation of the country.[54] Nonetheless, whether the princess gave her name to the region is debatable; al-Askar believes, for instance, that the princess might have taken her name from the region, and not vice versa.[55]

Yamāma suffered constantly from incursions during the pre-Islamic period. One inscription from the year 360 says that the kings of Himyar undertook campaigns against Yabrin (East Arabia), Jaww (Yamāma), and Kharj (central Arabia).[56] The first Sassanian ruler Ardashir (AD 224-242) also marched on Oman, Bahrain and Yamāma. The campaign of Shapur II (309-379) likewise reached Yamāma,[57] where he encountered the tribes Tamīm, Bakr b. Wā'il and ʿAbd al-Qays. It is also reported that "...he passed on to Yamama where he made general slaughter."

Khusraw I (531-579), who saw to the efficient administration of Yamāma, appointed Mundhir b. Nuʿmān (504-554) over the lands of Oman, Bahrain, Yamāma and Ṭāʾif.[58] It is also said, however, that Kawād (488-531) had already appointed Mundhir as the lord of Arabia.[59]

Just prior to Islam, Muʿāwiya b. Ḥujr—splitting from his brother's kingdom of Kinda—apparently made Yamāma the capital of his area of sovereignty. Certain connections between Mecca and Yamāma are reported, with some Meccans even migrating to Musaylima's region.[60] It is said that the tribe Rabīʿa, the ancestor of Ḥanīfa, came originally from Ḥijāz.[61]

During the emergence of Islam, Hawdha b. ʿAlī from the tribe Ḥanīfa was the ruler of Yamāma, and he in fact allied himself with the Persians. Invited to Islam by the Prophet through a letter—a matter that we will discuss below—he nonetheless refused, but then died shortly afterwards. Musaylima then seems to have joined the struggle to inherit his power, especially in the wake of declining Persian influence. This placed him on a collision course with the new potential power of the contemporary world, namely Medina.

[54] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 1, 629-632; *The History vol. iv, the Ancient Kingdoms*. Trans. Moshe Perlmann (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) 151-154; See also, Yaqūt, *Muʿjam* vol. 5,441-447; al-Aʿshā poems n. 446. See also al-Masʿūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān wa man abāda al-ḥidthān wa ʿajāʾib al-buldān wa-l-ghāmir bi al-māʾ wa-l-ʿumrān* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1386/1966) 124-126; idem, *Murūj al-dhahab* vol. 2, 52.

[55] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 10.

[56] Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs, from the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001) 49.

[57] See also, F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 37.

[58] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 240.

[59] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 81.

[60] Hamidullah, *The Life and Work of The Prophet of Islam*, trans. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1998) vol. 1, 303.

[61] Al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿĀmir and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1950) 16-17.

Economy

Yamāma was a prosperous region, with a diverse economy based on agriculture, trade, mining, and industry. Thanks to its numerous wells and canals for irrigation,[62] the land produced wheat, grains, cereals and various fruits, particularly dates.[63] In the time of Ṭasm and Jādis, Yamāma was "...a most fertile and highly cultivated land, a land most prosperous, with a variety of fruit, wondrous orchards....". The products were exported to Mecca[64] and to elsewhere in Arabia and beyond, including Baṣra, Bushire, Bahrain, Muscat or India.[65]

In fact, Yamāma was a crucial link in the caravan routes bringing goods to central Arabia and further north-east.[66] Unsurprisingly, some caravans, it is reported, passed through Yamāma on their way to other regions, such as Mecca, Medina, Persia, Yemen and Uman.

In mining, gold in particular played an important role in the economy of the region, a factor that attracted many people from other regions to come to Yamāma as laborers. Likewise, the tribe Ḥanīfa migrated to other regions—e.g. Egypt—because of the demand for their mining skills. In addition, industry, in the form of leather products and the making of wine from dates, was common in Yamāma. [67]

During the first civil strife between the third rightly guided caliph ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, and ʿĀʾisha, the latter passed through Yamāma, leading troops consisting of around 600 cavalry, passing close by such areas as al-Munkadir, Wāsiṭ, and Falj. She was on the way to Kufa. In a poem, she praised the water and fertility of the valley there. [68]

Due to the prosperity of Yamāma, Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān owned land in the region, whose cultivation involved thousands of slaves.[69]

[62] For more on the the system of the irrigation in Yamāma, see al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 46-48.

[63] For various names of the date, see al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 48-49.

[64] F. McGraw Donner, "Mecca's Food Supplies and Muḥammad's Boycott," *JESHO* 20, 254; cf. al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān*, ed. Micheal Jan de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1885) 27-30; Wüstenfeld, "Bahrein und Jamama. Nach Arabischen Geographen beschrieben" *Abhandlungen der königlichen Gessellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 19 (1874), 173-222.

[65] Daniel T. Potts, ""Trans-Araban routes of the pre-Islamic period" in ed. Peters, *Arabs and Arabia* 45-46.

[66] See Daniel T. Potts, "Trans-Araban routes" 57; see also anayza to Yamama p. 59.

[67] Al-Askar, *al-Yamāma* 51-52.

[68] *Tārīkh*, vol. 4, 454; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, vol. xvi. The Community Devided*. Trans. Adrian Brockett (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) 46.

[69] Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965) vol. 4, 201; cf. Micheal J. Morony, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī*, 163. n. 486; J. Wellhausen, *Religiös-politischen Oppositionensparteien im altern Islam* (Berlin: Weidmansche Buchhandlung, 1901) 30; More on the issues of the land ownership in the early Islamic society, see, for instance, Hugh Kennedy, "Elite Income in the Early Islamic State" in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic* 13-28. See also Askar, al-Yamāma 45-46.

Religion

Mecca, Ṭā'if, and Yamāma bore some similarities in that, among other things, these regions were all considered religious centers by the Arabs. Thus, shrines were not uncommon to all of them. As for Yamāma, Musaylima, al-Ṭabarī reports, erected a sacred enclave there in the village called Aḥālif, a locale belonging to the clan Usayyid.[70] However, the important question is whether the function of the shrine of Yamāma ever approached that of the Kaʿba in Mecca.

Before proceeding further, we should recall briefly the religious traditions of Arabia in late antiquity, prior to Islam, which both classical Muslim sources and the Western scholars have depicted as largely pagan. The classical Muslim writers report that paganism was commonly found even in Mecca, where idols—whose names are listed preserved in the work of al-Kalbī—were worshipped.[71] In addition, belief in supernatural beings, such as spirits, was not uncommon among the Arabs. Both pre-Islamic poetry and the Qur'ān attest that the *jinn* was seen as a powerful spiritual being and there were many who believed themselves possessed by one.

The age of polytheism coincided with the rise of the Bronze Age in Arabia. As this came to a close, monotheism arose in the peninsula. It is said that the Himyarite king Abikarib Asʿad (383-433)—encouraged by the Jews from

[70] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, 283; trans. Donner, *History* 108; The confederation (*aḥālif*) consisted of Sayḥān, Numāra, Nimr, al-Ḥārith; cf. Kister "Mecca and Tamīm (Aspects of their Relations)" *JESHO* 3, 2 (1965) 146; W. Caskel *Ğamharāt an-Nasab, das geneologische Werk des Hišam ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) vol 1, table 83.

[71] *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1384/1964); trans. R. Klinke-Rosenberger, *Das Götzenbuch* (Leipzig: Harrasowitz, 1941); N. A. Faris, *The Book of Idols, Being a Translation from the Arabic of Kitāb al-aṣnām by Hishām ibn al-Kalbī* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952).

Research by modern scholars essentially still relies on these classical Muslim reports as their main sources. Hoyland, however, presents material evidence—such as inscriptions, archeological findings, and non-Arabic sources—in his account of the pre-Islamic era of Arabia. Hoyland's findings tend to confirm the classical Muslim account, with the difference of his new material evidence and the application of a non-Muslim perspective. He puts it that "[u]p until about the fourth century AD almost all the inhabitants of Arabia were polytheists. We know many of the names of their deities, since the most common aim of Arabian inscriptions was to invoke the gods in some way, usually petitioning them or thanking them."

Arabia was replete with monuments, buildings, temples, stones, and graffitis dedicated to various gods and goddesses, among them the main deities of the early Arabian peninsula: "Almaqa (Sabeans), Wadd (Mineans), ʿAmm (Qatabanians) and Sayin (Hadramites)." In Petra we hear of the god ʿUzzā, and in Ḥijāz Hubāl and Manāt. See Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 139-142; see also J. Wellhausen and Joseph Henninger "Pre-Islamic Bedouin Religion" in *The Arabs and Arabia* ed. Peters, 114-118.

Yathrib—converted to Judaism.[72] Finally, "in the fourth to sixth centuries Chirstianity made major inroads into Arabia."[73]

The inhabitants of Yamāma are said to have remained pagans throughout this period,[74] although some of them converted to Christianity. Hawdha b. ʿAlī,[75] for example, is said to have celebrated Easter.[76] The tribes Taghlib and Bakr were also mostly Christian. In addition, it is reported that "...around 390 [AD] a certain 'Abdisho' left southern Iraq for 'an island of Yamāma and Bahrain', where 'he lived an ascetic life, baptized its inhabitans and built a monastery."[77]

Due to these beliefs in the supernatural world and deities, in Arabia the concepts of sacred place and time were preserved and guarded by believers. The word used to express the taboo was *ḥrm* (*ḥaram* or *maḥram*), meaning sacred or sacrosanct.[78]

72 Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 146.

73 Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 147. However, we are still "ill-informed about the character of the Christianity" in Arabia prior to Islam. In this regard, Irfan Shahid has attempted to trace some elements of "Monophysite," but "the argument rests almost entirely on inference or wishful thinking." See Peters, "Introduction" in his *Arabs and Arabia* xxvi-xxvii. For more discussion on the theme, see, for instance, Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989) 355-60; idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995) vol. 1, 850-53; Spenser J. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London: Longman, 1979) 258-259. As regards the emergence of Islam, Peters puts it, "Muḥammad's immediate milieu at Mecca was, it is clear, neither Christian nor Jewish, but paganus, a word in vogue among the Christians of late antiquity to describe those who were not monotheists and who worshipped idols." (Introduction xxviii).

74 According to a report by Abū Rajā' al-ʿUṭāridī, the people of Yamāma worshipped cows made from stone or clay. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Maghāzī*, vol. 2, 873. It is also reported that in Ḥajar, the capital of Yamāma, people annually held 20 days-fair of al-Mushaqqar in every 10th of Muḥarram. See Hamidullah, *Life and Work* vol. 1, 303.

75 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 215: "*wa kāna naṣrāniyyan.*"

76 Askar, *al-Yamama* 78.

77 Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 30.

78 In this regard, Serjeant lists other sanctuaries besides the Kaʿba of Mecca, such as the *maḥram* of Bilqīs at Maʿrib, that of Dhū Samāwī at Ṭimna', capital of Qabaṭan, and another in Jawf of Yemen. Serjeant also refers to the sacred tomb attributed to the prophet Hūd in Hadramawt, which served as a center of ritual, ceremony, and religious belief from pre-Islamic times down to the coming of Islam. See R. B. Serjeant, "Ḥaram and Hawtah, the Sacred Enclave in Arabia" *Mélanges Taha Husain*, ed. Abdurraḥmān Badāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) 52; idem, "Pre-islamic Prophets of Hadramawt" *Le Museon* 67 (1954) 123-131.

Furthermore, Hoyland describes the function of the various Arabian temples—al-Maqāh in Maʿrib, Sayin at Shabwa and Dhū Samāwī at Yathill (modern Barāqish)—as holy places and destinations of pilgrimages. Long before Islam, in fact, certain deeds—such as sexual relations and bringing weapons—were prohibited in the sacred months during which the pilgrimage took place. Certain tribes even bore particular responsibility for guarding these sacred places. See Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* 161.

Early Muslim sources have also recorded the existence of a sacred building called the *buss*, seen as an imitation of the Kaʿba. The *buss*, it is said, was erected and worshipped by the tribe of Ghaṭafān during the conflict between Meccans and the tribe Murra in pre-Islamic times. This *buss* served as a place for pilgrimage and was circumambulated just like the Kaʿba, before it was eventually destroyed.[79]

Present-day scholars still discuss the extent of the continuity or discontinuity between local Arab paganism and the religion of Islam—in terms of religious, political, and social aspects. The shift from polytheism to monotheism in particular is a puzzle. On the other hand, the Kaʿba as the center of religious ritual constitutes a major witness to both polytheism and monotheism, being considered *ḥarām* and meant as a sacred enclave, sanctuary, temple, and simply as the house of God. Religious ceremonies and numerous rituals have been performed there since its founding long before Islam.

Connected to the Kaʿba is the vital concept of *ḥanīf*, which is said to have been the religion of the prophet Abraham, who built this house of God.[80] Guarding the house was the shared responsibility of certain Arab tribes, who had to ensure its continued sacredness. To do so, the people had to organize themselves in accordance with the structure of the existing tribal system. Hence, any discussion on the religion, social, economy, and politics of the Meccan tribes prior to Islam has to take into account the crucial role of the Kaʿba. Undoubtedly, the tribe of Quraysh[81] was among the select few that enjoyed religious, social and political privileges and nobility from pre-Islamic times down through the four rightly guided caliphs, the Umayyads, and the early Abbasids.

Turning to the shrine in Yamāma, one may ask further whether or not it served the same function as the Kaʿba in Mecca. Eickelman and Serjeant believe this to have been the case, and have concluded that the name of the father of Musaylima, i.e., Ḥabīb, indicated nobility and was therefore

[79] Wellhausen, *Reste Arabishcen Heidentums* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1897) 33, n. 2; Kister "Mecca and the tribes of Arabia" in *Society and Religion* 43 and 52.

[80] It is likely, according to Rubin, that in Ḥijāz many Arabs had embraced the cult of *ḥānif* prior to Muḥammad's prophethood; see his "Hanafiyya and Kaʿba: an Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of *Dīn* Ibrāhīm" in *The Arabs and Arabia* 267-293. For more on the function of the Kaʿba for the early Arab society, see his "The Kaʿba: Aspects of Its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times" 313-47. For more on the way in which the Arabs guarded the shrine, see, for instance, Gerald R. Hawting, "The 'Sacred Offices' of Mecca from Jahiliyya to Islam" *The Arabs and Arabia* 244-266. See also the discussion on *ḥānif* in chapter eight below.

[81] For more discussion on this issue, see, for instance, Kister "Mecca and Tamīm;" Ugo Fabietti, "The Role Played By The Organization Of the "Hums" in The Evolution Of Political Ideas in Pre-Islamic Mecca" in *The Arabs and Arabia* 348-356.

involved to some extent in exercising guardianship over the sacred enclave in Yamāma.[82]

Al-Ṭabarī reports that it was Musaylima himself who erected the *ḥaram* (*wa ḍaraba ḥarām bi al-Yamāma*) in his country. The story may be summarized as follows: The Banu Sayḥān, Numāra, Nimr and al-Ḥārith b. Jurwa were said to have been guardians of the enclave, and the Usayyids described as its defilers. When asked about this matter by his people, Musaylima then expected revelation from God (see also chapter nine below). Hence, we may draw conclusions from this limited picture that the *ḥaram* in Yamāma was sacred, guarded and related to Musaylima's religious preaching.

As regards the violators of this *ḥaram*, these were perhaps local opponents; in fact, a similar theme is encountered frequently in the biography of Muḥammad itself in the early Meccan period. Thus, the story of Thaʿālibī that some of the people mocked the prophet from Yamāma is reminiscent of Muḥammad's experience. However, we have not yet arrived at satisfactory answer as when the shrine in Yamāma came into being. If one takes the word (*ḍaraba*) literally in the above report of al-Ṭabarī, one can perhaps draw the conclusion that the *ḥaram* was established by Musaylima. Alternatively, it is also plausible to assume that a certain *ḥaram* had existed there even before Musaylima, serving as the focus of religious life in Yamāma. However, we may wonder why the people of Yamāma, if they had their own *ḥaram*, continued to visit the Kaʿba in Mecca? Was that because they originally came from Hijaz and still viewed the Kaʿba as superior to other *ḥarams*? Given the absence of conclusive evidence, however, all this remains mere speculation.

Nor can we determine how far the *ḥaram* of Yamāma might have influenced the political, religious, and social relations of the tribes in Yamāma or what kind of contribution it might have made to the prophethood of Musaylima. Be that as it may, the story of al-Ṭabarī does reflect the knowledge and imagination of the informants themselves; indeed, the concept of the sacred enclave was still fresh in their memory and may still have been operative in their time in Arabia. What is clear is that Yamāma was still significant in the eyes of most Muslim scholars, due to the failure of this local prophet to defend his mission.

82 Eickelman, "Musaylima" 43 n. 2; cf. Serjeant, "Ḥaram and Hawtah" 56. However, it seems unlikely that the name Ḥabīb bore the above meaning. To illustrate, two Ḥabībs seem to have served as nothing more than common personal names, such as the cases of Ḥabīb b. Maslama (b. ca. 617-d. 42/671) and Ḥabīb b. ʿAbd al-Mālik. The first Ḥabīb was a military commander of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān and acted as a representative in the negotiations with ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib after the battle of Ṣiffīn. Another Ḥabīb was a grandson of al-Wālid I, who eventually went to Cordova and served as a commander in chief of the cavalry of Caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I (ca. 138/756). It was this Ḥabīb who founded the Ḥabībī lineage in Cordova. However, it seems that there is no report which explains that the name Ḥabīb related to the sanctuary of Kaʿba. See J. W. Fück and E. Terés "Ḥabīb" in *EI*[2].

Under Muslim Sovereignty

The conquest of Yamāma served as a turning point in the history of the beginning of the annexation of the region by Medina. After the war, Khālid b. al-Walīd appointed Samra b. Khalaf al-Anbārī to be responsible for the affairs of Yamāma, while the first official *ʿāmil* (representative) appointed by Medina was Sāliṭ b. Qays. Both officials were Anṣārs. However, it seems that Abū Bakr did not prioritize the development of Yamāma and even punished its people by such means as not allowing them to join the Muslim army.

As ʿUmar himself disagreed with the terms of the truce arrived at by Khālid b. al-Walīd between the Muslims and the people of Yamāma, the second caliph followed no less harsh a policy than did his predecessor. The third caliph, ʿUthmān, appointed ʿUtham b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ al-Thaqafī as *walī* (representative) of ʿArūd, whereas during the civil strife in the time of the caliphate of ʿAlī, ʿUmayr b. Salama, a native of Yamāma, seized power over the region.[83]

Moreover, the tribal groups of Rabīʿa—which included the tribe Ḥanīfa—sided with ʿAlī in the civil war, a fact that likely contributed to the hostility of the Umayyads towards the people of Yamāma even in the later period. Then, as soon as the center of the administration of Muslim power moved to Damascus, some Arab regions played a less significant role. In addition, the rulers sometimes treated Yamāma not as a fully independent administration but attached it to other regions, such as Ḥijāz or even Iraq.

Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān, it is reported, added Yamāma to the territory controlled by his ardent supporter, Ziyād b. Abīhi, who is said to have protested that "[i]ndeed, I have seized Iraq with my left hand while my right hand is empty. So Muʿāwiya added al-ʿArūd to him, which is Yamāma and what is adjacent to it."[84]

It is noteworthy that during the reign of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya, the Khārijite leader Najda b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī was placed in charge of Yamāma (62 H.) after al-Ḥusayn, the grandson of Muḥammad, was killed. The political activities of the Khārijite revolution, it is reported, were carefully planned and executed there. Najda himself was eventually killed in 72/697.[85] Al-Mukhtār, an insurgent leader against Marwānid and Zubayrid, said, "...I saw Ibn Zubayr

[83] Abū Hurayra, it is said, was once placed in charge of the region. For more on the administration of the Yamāma; see Askar, *al-Yamama* 129-132.

[84] *Tārīkh*, vol. 5, 288-289; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, Between Civil War: the Caliphate of Muʿāwiyah*, trans. Michael G. Morony (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) 167.

[85] *Tārīkh*, vol. 5, 479; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, vol. xix. The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya*. Trans. I. K. A. Howard (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 197. See also Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 4, 201-206, under heading "*dhikr Najda b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī*" and "*dhikr ikhtilāf...*"; J. Wellhausen, *Religiös-politischen* 30-32; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 197. Najda b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī was a leader of Khāriji who controlled central Arabia since 64/683. See also ʿAbd al-Ameer ʿAbd Dixon, *The Umayyad Caliphate, 65-86/684-705, a Political Study* (London, Luzac, 1971) 74.

seize the Ḥijāz for himself; I saw Najda [b. ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī] seize al-Yamāma, and Marwān Syria."[86] At a later stage under the Marwānid rulers, Yamāma, together with Mecca and Yemen, was governed by the well known supporter of the dynasty, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsūf.[87]

The marginalization of Yamāma continued into the early Abbasid period; rulers seldom treated the region as a fully independent administration, but instead attached it to neighbouring jurisdictions. Thus, at the time of the Abbasid revolution, Abū Abbās al-Ṣaffāḥ gave authority over Yamāma, Medina and Mecca to his paternal uncle Dāwūd b. ʿAlī (132 H.).[88] Later, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty gave these regions to his maternal uncle, Ziyād b. ʿUbaydalla al-Ḥārithī (134 H.).[89] In the time of al-Mahdī, the governor of Yamāma was Qutham b. al-ʿAbbās; the latter, however, was deposed after incurring the anger of the caliph and replaced by Bishr b. al-Mundhir al-Bajālī.[90] Still in the time of this caliph, Ṭāʿif, Mecca and al-Yamāma were placed under one administration, that of Jaʿfar b. Sulaymān.[91] Then, at the end of al-Mahdī's reign (167 H.), Mecca and al-Ṭāʿif were placed under ʿUbdaydalla b. Qutham, Yemen under Sulaymān b. Yazīd al-Ḥārithī, and Yamāma under ʿAbdalla b. Muṣʿab al-Zubayrī.[92]

The people of Yamāma, Askar contends further, always tended to support any movement that promised the independence of the region. This regional loyalty can be seen from as early as the time of Hawdha, Musaylima, Najda, Muhayr, and the Alawids,[93] to as late as the Wahhabi movement. For example, regional sentiment also encouraged the people of Yamāma to support the rebels of Najda. This Khārijite leader, it seems, realized that the independence of the region from outside control, such as that of Damascus, was a dream shared by all of its people, evoking the earlier case of Musaylima, who defended his homeland from mere submission to Medina. Askar goes further, saying that regional feeling continued to play a significant role for the rebels

[86] Dated by Al-Ṭabarī in the year 67 H. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 107; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, vol. xxi. The Victory of the Marwānids*, trans. Michael Fishbein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 104. n. 385.

[87] *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 194; trans. Fishbein, *The History* vol xxi 234.

[88] *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 458; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī vol. xxvii. The Abbasid Revolution*, trans. John A. Williams (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985) 195.

[89] *Tārīkh* vol. 7, 459; trans. John A. Williams, *History* 196.

[90] *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 121; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī vol. xxix. Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī*, trans. Hugh Kennedy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 177.

[91] *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 141; trans. Hugh Kennedy, *The History vol. xxix* 204.

[92] ʿAbdalla was a descendent of Prophet's Companion al-Zubayr, an important informant among whom Ṭabarī relied. See his *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 166; trans. Hugh Kennedy, *The History vol. xxix* 238-9. n. 771.

[93] For more accounts of the Alāwids in the region, see, for instance, Naser-e-Khosrou, *Safarname, Ein Reisebericht aus dem Orient des 11. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Seyfeddin Najmabadi and Siegfried Weber (München: Diederichs, 1993) 149-150.

of Muhayr under the late Umayyads, the Alawids and the Abbasids, and even down to the Wahhabi movement beginning in the eighteenth century.

Nonetheless, in the next chapter I will present some figures of Yamāma at the time of Musaylima, including those who stood on his side and those who were against him.

Chapter Seven

Companions and Opponents

It appears that a huge number of the people of Ḥanīfa supported Musaylima, as reported that during the war of Yamāma, forty thousand people fought on his side. However, *sīra*, *ṭabaqāt*, and *tārīkh* literature fail to mention their names. Yet these sources provide us some names of those who stood against Musaylima. This chapter therefore presents some figures of Ḥanīfa, who became Musaylima's companions and opponents. Some figures of Yamāma, who came prior to him and after him, are also briefly discussed.

The Tribe of Ḥanīfa

The Arabs treated the tribal pedigree as their history. If one wished to determine reputation of a person, one had to discover the tribe to which he belonged. Enderwitz is right in saying that "...the emphasis on the social role of the individual affects his perception of identity which is primarily based on genealogy."[1] The chief illustration of this is how Muḥammad was always seen in connection with the Quraysh. Even though the tribe became a major obstacle to his mission in the early days of Mecca and Medina, the pride of the Prophet in his genealogy is attested in many traditions; and various political, social and religious privileges were therefore granted to the tribe in history.

When we compare the pedigrees of the two prophets, we find that Muḥammad was a descendent of Muḍār, whereas Musaylima was of the

[1] Susanne Enderwitz, "From Curriculum Vitae to Self-narration: Fiction in Arabic Autobiography" in *Story-telling in the Framework of non-ficitional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998) 7.

lineage of Rabīʿa.[2] It is noteworthy that both were likewise descendents of Nizār, a son of Maʿd who was in turn the son of ʿAdnān.[3] One might wonder at the significance of this link between the tribal pedigree of Muḥammad and that of Musaylima, while also remembering that "the descent may have been in many instances fictive, but the tribes themselves were real enough."[4] Thus, even if the lineage of Muḍār and Rabīʿa was merely an invention in the later period, a tribal alliance between the two once did exist, regardless of when it occurred and whether it was before or after the death of the two prophets.

The tribe Ḥanīfa,[5] it is said, moved from Ḥijāz to Yamāma after the pre-Islamic war of Basūs, a fact that tends to confirm our assumption that the link between the Quraysh and the Ḥanīfa was not merely one of pedigree, but, in fact, of shared origin in Ḥijāz. It is also said that the tribe was among the earliest inhabitants of Yamāma, who mostly cultivated the land.

Other tribes dwelling in Yamāma in the sixth and seventh centuries, such as the tribe Namīr, were mostly agriculturalists but also remained in part nomadic. Another line of Bakr b. Wāʾil, the tribe Sadūs, engaged in the mining industry. The tribe Tamīm constituted the largest concentration of Bedouins or semi-Bedouins in Yamāma, especially after the Battle of Yamāma. Other tribes such as Hazzān, Bahīla, Kilāb, and Kaʿb were also among the inhabitants of Yamāma. They were engaged in various occupations such as agriculture, mining, trade and industry, while others remained nomads.[6]

[2] The competition among lineages in Early Muslim community is attested by, for instance, the following statement: "I told you that Rabīʿa would never cease raging against its Lord, since God sent The Prophet from among Muḍār." See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962); *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, vol. xx, The collapse of Sufyanid Authority and the Coming of the Marwānids*, trans. G. R. Hawting (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 75.

[3] W. Caskel, *Ǧamharāt an-Nasab, das geneologische Werk des Hišam ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) vol. 1, 1, table 1.

[4] F. E. Peters, „Introduction" in ed. F. E. Peters, *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) xiv.

[5] The complete pedigree of the tribe Ḥanīfa is as follows: Ḥanīfa b. Lujaym b. Saʿb b. ʿAlī b. Bakr b. Wāʾil b. Qāsiṭ b. Hinb b. ʿAfṣā b. Duʿmā b. Jadīla b. Asad b. Rabīʿa b. Nizār. See al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab li ibn al-kalbī*, ed. Maḥmūd Firdaws al-ʿAẓim and Maḥmūd Fakhūrī (Damascus: Dār al-Yaqḍa al-ʿArabiyya) vol. 2, 262; Caskel, *Ǧamharat* vol. 1, 141 table 141; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam qabāʾil al-ʿarab al-qadīma wa-l-ḥadītha*, 5th ed. (Muʿassasa al-Risāla, 1985/1405) vol. 1, 312-313; Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Ṭayyib, *Mawsūʿa al-qabāʾil al-ʿarabiyya, buḥūs maydāniyya wa tārīkhiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1418/1997) vol. 1, 42-54; Watt, "Ḥanīfa b. Lujaym" *EI.*[2]

[6] See Abdullah al-Askar, *al-Yamama in the Early Islamic Era* (Reading: Ithaca, 2002) 36-40.

The Predecessors

Historically speaking, Arabs had already served in the military forces of Rome as early as the reign of Constantine (272–337 AD).[7] This relationship seems to have gone beyond military service and included political treaties and trade connections until the fourth century. In the fifth century Byzantium held sway in the adjacent desert lands of Arabia.[8] However, by the mid-sixth century the Sassanians had taken control of much of the east and the central region, in both politics and trade. It was not until the end of the century that Sassanian rule had started to decline. The Lakhmids, serving as their agents, experienced a similar loss of power, allowing local nomadic tribes to seize local control.[9]

As for Yamāma in the period before Musaylima's political career, Muslim sources report that there were two prominent figures: Hawdha b. ʿAlī, a political leader, and al-Aʿshā, a poet.

Hawdha,[10] who originally came from Qurrān,[11] was among the most important central Arabian rulers of his time. Due to his stance in favor of the Persians, Khusraw Anushirwan had awarded him a crown. Henceforth, Hawdha was reknowned as *dhū al-tāj* (the one who owns the crown). Perhaps it was for this reason that the Prophet addressed him as a king (*mālik*).[12] Another gift, al-Kalbī reports, was a *qalānsuwa* (hood), priced at thirty thousands dirhāms.[13] The alliance of Yamāma with the Persians was not surprising, when we consider the broader political situation in Arabia, for "[b]y the sixth century the Byzantines and the rival Sassanians in Iraq and Iran were each using Arab seconds both to defend their own borders and to threaten the others."[14]

7 Peters, "Introduction" in ed. F. E. Peters *Arabs and Arabia* xviii-xix; I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs: Prolegomenaon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs* (Washington, 1984) 52-63.

8 Peters, "Introduction" in ed. F. E. Peters *Arabs and Arabia* xx.

9 Peters, "Introduction" in ed. F. E. Peters *Arabs and Arabia* xxv; see also the wars between the two emperors in Clive Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity" in *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Time*, ed. Micheal Bonner (Aldershot: Voriorum, 2004) 722-724.

10 His complete pedigree is as follows: Hawdha b. ʿAlī b. Thumāma b. ʿAmr b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿAmr b. Abd al-ʿUzzā b. Suḥaym. See al-Kalbī, *Jamharat* vol. 2, 262.

11 ʿAbdalla b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam mā istaʿjam min asmāʾ al-bilād wa-l-mawādiʿ*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Lajna al-Taʾlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1368/1949) vol. 3, 1063. Qurrān, another valley in Yamāma where the tribe Ḥanīfa also settled, is today known as the valley Malham. The remains of a church can still be found there; see al-Askar, *al-Yamāma* 15 and 20.

12 Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm and Sayyid Shaḥḥāṭa (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa) vol. 3, 23.

13 Al-Kalbī, *Jamharat* vol. 2, 262.

14 Peters, "Introduction" xx in his *Arabs and Arabia*; Kister, "Al-Hira: Some Notes on Its Relations with Arabia" *Ibid* 81.

Yamāma had benefited indirectly from the peace treaty between Byzantium and Persia in 561, following which trade activities flourished in the region.[15] The region played another role as well, in that local authorities guaranteed the safety of the caravans that passed through.

Contacts between Yamāma and Medina took place even before Musaylima came to power. The Prophet in Medina summoned Hawdha to Islam in a letter, to which Hawdha responded in a very diplomatic terms:

> How excellent is that to which you invite me, and how beautiful! Whereas I am a poet of my people and its orator, and the Arabs respect my dignity, so give me part of the authority which (you possess), and I shall follow you.[16]

Interestingly, the above answer from Hawdha[17] to the Prophet contains an element familiar from the letter of Musaylima, in that both figures invoked a demand for a share of power in Arabia. Recalling the conversation between Muḥammad and Musaylima in the story of the deputation, Musaylima seems to have repeated the bargaining position of Hawdha. It is hard to say with certainty whether Musaylima just repeated the content of the letter of his predecessor or whether later Muslim narrators composed that of Hawdha based on the story of Musaylima. What is certain is that the narration of both figures shows paradigmatic and repetitive tendencies.[18]

[15] Askar, *al-Yamāma* 54.

[16] Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah, *Majmūʿa al-wathāʾiq al-siyāsiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 1958) 156-157. Ref. cited. French trans. by Hamidullah and in English by Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, Hamidullah, *The Life and Work of The Prophet of Islam* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1998) vol. 1, 305. al-Ḥalabī, *Insān wa ʿUyūn* vol. 3, 303; al-Anṣārī, *Miṣbāh* vol. 2, 355; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-maʿād* vol. 3, 63.

[17] Ibn Ḥabīb preserves a report that The Prophet Muhammad once proposed to a widow of Hawdha, named Ḍubāʿa bt. ʿĀmir b. Qarṭ b. Salama b. Qushayr b. Kaʿb b. Rabīʿa b. ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣaʿa, who is said to have been among the most beautiful women in Arabia, which news had reached The Prophet. After realizing, however, that she was too old at the time, The Prophet declined to marry her. Instead, she married ʿAbdalla b. Jaʿdān al-Tamīmī and then Hishām b. Mughīra respectively. See Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muhabbar* ed. Ilse Lichtenstädter (Beirut: Dāʾira al-Maʿārif, 1361/1942) 97, 438-439; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, 169; *The Last Years of The Prophet vol. ix*, trans. Ismail K. Poonawala (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 140, see also n. 931.

[18] Speaking of The Prophet's correspondence, it is said that, at the end of his life, he actively sent letters and emissaries to many Arab rulers. This included challenging many claimants to prophethood. See Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-muḍī*, ed. Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudīr (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 1, 331; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh ibn khaldūn al-musammā bi kitāb al-ʿibar wa dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar wa min ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa, 1355/1936) vol. 2, 266.

The Prophet Muḥammad sent Salīṭ b. ʿAmr, who died in the days of Badr, to Hawdha and Thumāma b. ʿUthāl to Yamāma. See al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 1, 271; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965) vol. 2, 210.

The Prophet sent Ziyād b. Hanẓala specifically to Musaylima. See al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 1, 270. The Prophet then dispatched ʿAmr b. ʿUmayya al-Ḍamīrī and Sāʾib b. al-ʿAwwām to the same region (al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 2, 271). The Prophet also sent in addition Sālīṭ b. Sālīṭ

Another predecessor of Musaylima in Yamāma, the celebrated poet Maymūn b. Qays al-Aʿshā (570-625), from the tribe Qays b. Thaʿlaba of Bakr b. Wāʾil,[19] was an important supporter of Hawdha's leadership, as is clear from the praise bestowed on the ruler in his poems.[20] Al-Aʿshā is said to have helped the war effort of Dhū Qār (605), which brought Yamāma under Persian influence. Thus he seems to have agreed with the political direction of Hawdha, which consisted allying with the Persians and opposing rival tribes, such as the Tamīm. According to Caskel, and inferring from a reading of his poems, al-Aʿshā was likely Christian, although the echoes of Christianity in his poems, Nichloson suggests, only resulted from his contacts with the bishops and Christian merchants in Najrān. It is noteworthy that al-Aʿshā once tried to meet with Muḥammad as part of a deputation. This story resembles the later story of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa in which Musaylima joined. However, Abū Sufyān, a leader of Quraysh and Muʿāwiya's father, barred al-Aʿshā from seeing the Prophet.[21]

Thus, Musaylima is portrayed in the sources as having played a role similar to both Hawdha and al-Aʿshā. On the one hand, Musaylima struggled to inherit the political power of Hawdha and continued the correspondence with the Prophet in Medina, while on the other, he followed the example given by al-Aʿshā in traveling to Medina as part of a deputation. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether these stories had any historical value or they are merely repetitive and paradigmatic, due to the role of later narrators.

One source tells us that it was the angel Jibrīl who told the Prophet of the death of Hawdha after the conquest of Mecca. The Prophet, however, predict-

to Yamāma to guide the people to Islam. See Khalīfa b. Khayyāt al-ʿUṣfūrī, *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyād*, ed. Akrām Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Najaf: Maṭbaʿa al-Adab fi-l-Najf al-Ashraf, 1386/1967) vol. 1, 63.

Ḥabīb b. Zayd b. ʿĀṣim—whose complete pedigree is spelled as Habīb b. Zayd b. ʿĀṣim b. ʿAmr b. ʿAwf b. Madhūl b. ʿAmr b. Ghanam b. Zamān b. al-Najjār (Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat* 332)—was likewise sent to Musaylima. However, Ḥabīb was apparently murdered by Musaylima. The reason for this was due to the reluctance of the emissary to admit The Prophethood of the latter. According to al-Balansī, the young man was even burned to death. See his *Tārīkh al-ridda, Iqtabasa min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970) 96-97. Ḥabīb's mother Nusayba in revenge fought at the Battle of Yamāma and received twelve wounds. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 1, 466-467; Trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 212 (see also chapter eleven below).

19 For more on Bakr b. Wāʾil, see Caskel, *Ğamharat* table 142. His poem, *the Diwān of al-Aʿshā*, ed. R. Geyer (London: Gibb mem. N.S. VI), 1928; Brockelmann, *GAL*, G 37; S I, 65-67; cf. Caskel, "Aʿshā" in *EI*².

20 Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil* vol. 3, 15.

21 R. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) 124. Ref. cited.

ed that "indeed in Yamāma the arch-liar will come and will be killed after me."[22] Someone asked, "Oh Messenger of God, who will kill him?" The Prophet said, "You and your fellows."[23]

Thumāma: A Competitor

Observing the local political situation of Yamāma, in particular after the waning of Persian influence and the death of Hawdha, it appears that there was rivalry for the leadership among many prominent figures in the tribe Ḥanīfa. Caskel writes of the process in general, "a leader can acquire a position character only by being appointed to, or confirmed in, his office by a non-Bedouin power; otherwise he is only primus *inter pares*. His authority is usually inherited, but it is sometimes won by his own efforts."[24] The competition here was between Musaylima and Thumāma b. ʿUthāl.[25] Among Musaylima's efforts in this direction was apparently his participation in the deputation to Medina seeking a political alliance.[26] Unsurprisingly, Thumāma, a rival from the beginning, is absent from accounts of the deputation story.

One of the strengths of the political position of Thumāma, whose nickname was Abū Umāma, was that he had the support of the Prophet in Medina. In addition, Thumāma and Hawdha were among the 'kings' to whom the Prophet had sent letters calling them to Islam.[27] Thumāma for his part converted to Islam, and did so earlier than the deputation of the tribe of Ḥanīfa.

Thumāma, as the story goes, was captured by Muslim cavalry during one of the campaigns. The Prophet ordered that Thumāma be treated gently, an action by which the Prophet won Thumāma's heart, leading him to Islam.[28] In effect, Thumāma allied himself with Medina and supported the boycott

[22] Al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīra al-amīn al-maʾmūn/Sīra al-ḥalabīyya* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, n.d.) vol. 3, 303-304.

[23] Al-Anṣāri, *Miṣbāḥ* vol. 2, 355.

[24] Werner Caskel, "The Bedounization of Arabia" in ed. F. E. Peters, *Arabs and Arabia* 35.

[25] His pedigree is given as follows: Thumāma b. ʿUthāl b. al-Nuʿmān b. Maslama b. ʿUbayd b. Thaʿlaba b. Yarbuʿ b. Thaʿlaba b. al-Dūl b. Ḥanīfa. See Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960) vol 5, 550-551; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud al-ghāba fī maʿrifat al-ṣaḥāba* (n.p.; n.d.) vol.1, 246-249; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 1, 203.

[26] Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) 133. According to al-Anṣārī, Thumāma b. ʿUthāl acted as an emissary sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad; see, al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 2, 346. It is likely that this confusion was due to the tradition, attributed to Ṭayālisī and later preserved by Ibn Kathīr (see chapter two above), which mentions Ibn ʿUthāl as an emissary. Al-Anṣārī, it seems, understands Ibn ʿUthāl as Thumāma Ibn ʿUthāl.

[27] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 1, 607. See also, Hamidullah, *The Life and Work of The Prophet* vol. 1, 303-304.

[28] See al-Bukhārī *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Maghāzī*, vol. 2, 872; Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 638-9; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 676-677; Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-Asmāʾ bi mā li Nabīy min al-Aḥwāl wa-l-Amwāl wa-l-Ḥafaḍa wa-l-Matāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999) vol. 14, 256-258.

against the Meccans, cutting off the food supply before the siege of that city.[29] This event is attested to by the revelation of Q. 23: 76: "We inflicted Punishment on them [Meccans], but they humbled not themselves to their Lord..."[30] Eventually, on the Prophet's order, Thumāma lifted the boycott.[31] Diyārbakrī tells us furthermore that Thumāma served as a representative (*ʿāmil*) of the Prophet in Yamāma. And it was Thumāma who later wrote to Abū Bakr to complain that the power of Musaylima in the region had increased and that this might endanger both himself and Medina.[32]

The clear rejection by Thumāma of Musaylima as a partner in prophethood with Muḥammad might also indicate an existing competiton between the two. According to Ibn al-Athīr, whereas the people of Yamāma apostatized and started to believe in Musaylima's prophethood, Thumāma remained firm in his faith in Islam and even delivered speeches warning the people.[33] Al-Balansī preserves this statement by Thumāma: "Listen and obey me, you are then guided. The two prophethoods do not compromise."[34]

Modern historians also hold various opinions regarding the political rivalry between Musaylima and Thumāma. Watt concludes that Thumāma served as leader of the nomadic element of Ḥanīfa, since he succeeded Hawdha as the local Persian agent.[35] On the other hand, Musaylima's followers were composed of mainly agriculturalists or settled people.[36] Kennedy hold the same assumption.[37] Eickelman suggests further that Thumāma's role was only inferential. Shoufani likewise holds that Thumāma led only "the small splinter of this tribe," whose members were "few and weak."[38] Kister is also of the opinion that Thumāma controlled "only one part" of Yamāma, whereas "the rest" were under the control of Musaylima.[39] Returning to the Muslim

29 Kister, "O God, Tighten Thy Grip on Muḍār ...Some Socio-Economic and Religious Aspects of an Early Ḥadīth" in *Society and Religion from Jahiliyya to Islam* (Hampshire: Voriorum, 1990) 260; Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ ʿalā-l-mawāhib al-laduniyya li-l-ʿallāma al-qasṭallānī* (Cairo: al-Azhar, 1327H) vol 2, 144-146; al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, k. Maghāzī*, vol. 2, 872. F. McGraw Donner, "Mecca's Food Supplies and Muḥammad's Boycott," *JESHO* 20, 249-266.

30 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 5, 550; Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 411; Donner, "Mecca's Food Supplies"; Kister, "O God," 251.

31 Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud Ghāba*, vol. 1, 247.

32 Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khāmis fī aḥwāl anfas nafīs* (Beirut: Muʿassasa Shaʿbān, n.d.) vol. 2, 160.

33 Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud al-ghāba*, vol. 1, 247-8.

34 Al-Balansi, *Tārīkh* 69; Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda, riwāya aḥmad b. muḥammad b. aʿtham al-kūfī* (d. 314), ed. Yaḥyā al-Juburī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990/1410) 117.

35 Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* 133.

36 Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* 135.

37 Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986) 44.

38 Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 84.

39 Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002) 11.

sources, such as those qouted by al-Maqrīzī, we learn that the tribe Ḥanīfa was at the time divided into two: those dwelling in Ḥajr supported Musaylima, whereas a section of the tribe Suḥaym and the villagers were on the side of Thumāma.[40]

Nonetheless, the competition between Musaylima and Thumāma has, over the centuries, exceeded the boundaries of their time and space, particularly in Muslim literature. Biographies of the Companions of the Prophet include Thumāma due to his alliance with Medina and his conversion to Islam. *Ḥadīth, sīra, tārīkh* and *ṭabaqāt* literature have reenacted his story many times. On the other hand, the memory of Musaylima has also been kept fresh due to his bravery in putting his prophethood equal to that of Muḥammad (see chapter four above and his stanzas *Tribalism* B and C in chapter nine below). Where they are most similar, however, is in the fact that both gave their lives in defense of their faith: Musaylima in Yamāma and Thumāma later in Bahrain. Depending on one's perspective, either can be considered a martyr or a traitor in the eyes of the Medinans or the people of Yamāma.

Comparing them further, the figure of Musaylima appears in works of *sīra, ḥadīth* and *tārīkh*, whereas Thumāma, besides his presence in the same genres of literature, is also recorded in the *ṭabaqāt* of the Companions of the Prophet. Yet although the name of Musaylima disappeared from the alphabetical entries of the biographical literature, his proclamation of prophethood echoed long after his death. This may be attributed to the fact that he was viewed as merely an antagonist, and Thumāma as a protagonist.

Al-Rajjāl and Muḥkam: Companions

Al-Rajjāl, Raḥḥāl, or Dajjāl b. ʿUnfuwwa was known as an ardent follower of Musaylima, to the extent that the dissension of the former was more serious than that of the latter (*Fa kānat fitnatuh ashadd min fitnat Musaylima*). The danger posed by al-Rajjāl is identified by al-Ṭabarī as follows: "He had emigrated to the Prophet, recited the Qur'ān, and become knowledgeable in religion; so the Prophet sent him against Musaylima to strengthen the situation of the Muslims."[41] The Prophet, as al-Nuwayrī further explains, even appointed Rajjāl as a teacher (*muʿallim*).[42] However, he eventually turned against his faith and voiced support for the prophethood of Musaylima, swearing to the latter "that he himself had heard Muḥammad saying that he [Muḥammad] made a partnership with him [Musaylima]." The people were thus persuaded

[40] Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ* vol. 14, 536-537.

[41] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 282; *The History, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. F. M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 107.

[42] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975) vol. 17, 86.

to believe in Musaylima's call and even "ordered him to write a letter to the Prophet," having gone over to his side.[43]

Al-Rajjāl also served as an informant of Musaylima, advicing him on how to imitate the miracles of Muḥammad.[44] Al-Rajjāl had learned much during the deputation to Medina, including the chapter "al-Baqara/the Cow" of the Qur'ān.[45] One may infer from this story that, had al-Rajjāl remained, he might have become part of the circle of Companions in Medina. However, the Prophet warned his followers against the danger of al- Rajjāl, saying: "O company, the molar tooth of one of you in hellfire on the Day of Judgement will be larger than Uhud."[46]

In the end, al-Rajjāl was killed by Zayd b. ʿUmar during the Battle of Yamāma.[47] Upon hearing this, Abū Hurayra and Furrāt b. Ḥayyān expressed their gratitude to God by performing prostration (*sujūd*),[48] because both remembered that al-Rajjāl had learnt the Qur'ān in their circle.[49]

Al-Wāqidī tells us that a certain al-Rajjāl b. [Nahshāl/ʿUnfuwwa] once testified: "Musaylima is right. I testify that indeed Muḥammad b. ʿAbdalla had made partnership with him in prophethood before his death." Muḥkam b. Ṭufayl, a leader of Yamāma, who also supported Musaylima, said: "I testify likewise."[50]

Muḥkam b. Ṭufayl[51] is also said to have served as a *wazīr* (advisor) of Musaylima.[52] Ibn Khaldun mentions no one by this name, but he does refer to a follower of Musaylima, named Muḥallam b. Sābiʿ b. Maslama b. ʿUbayd b. Thaʿlaba b. al-Dūl b. Ḥanīfa.[53] No information can be found in Ibn Khaldun's

[43] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 282; trans. Donner, *History* 107.

[44] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 284; trans. Donner, *History* 110.

[45] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 6, 323; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 284-285; trans. Donner, *History* 117. Al-Thaʿālibī attributes the hypocrisy of Rajjāl to the fact that "he went to Medina, recited the Qur'ān, showed the faith and hid the infidelity." See Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb* 148. Al-Rajjāl, according to a further account by al-Maqrīzī, learnt *sūrat al-Baqara* (the cow), the *Āli ʿImrān* (the family of ʿImran) and the traditions (*sunan*). See Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmā* vol. 14, 230.

[46] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, 285; trans. Donner, *History* 118. The above report was transmitted by Furrāt b. Ḥayyān, the one whom The Prophet sent to Yamāma in order to strengthen the position of Thumāma and to kill Musaylima, if possible. See al-Anṣāri, *al-Misbāḥ* vol. 1, 312-313.

[47] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* 341.

[48] Al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 1, 313.

[49] Al-Zurqānī, *Sharḥ* vol. 4, 24.

[50] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 108-9; see also Aḥmad b. Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *al-Futūḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿIlmiyya, 1406/1989) vol. 1, 26-27.

[51] Al-Wāqidī quotes a lampoon ridiculing the actions of these companions. Upon hearing this, Musaylima had the man killed. See al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb* 110; see also Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 159; al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmā'* vol. 14, 230-231; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt* vol. 1, 53.

[52] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb* 113.

[53] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 106.

accounts regarding the role Muḥallam might have played with respect to the prophet from Yamāma; nevertheless, it stands to reason that Muḥallam and Muḥkam might have been the same person.

Al-Balansī tells us, based on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar, that al-Rajjāl was an outstanding member of the deputation (*afẓal al-wafd*).[54] A report from Rāfiʿ b. Khudayj mentions that al-Rajjāl was a pious man and good at reading the Qurʾān and even admirable (*min al-khushūʿ wa luzūm qirāʾat al-Qurʾān wa-l-khayr fī mā narā shayʾ ʿajīb*). Yet when al-Rajjāl was among the Companions—Abū Hurayra, Ubay, al-Dūsī, Ṭufayl b. ʿUmar—the Prophet said "one of these will be in hellfire (*Aḥad hāʾulāʾ al-nafar fī-l-nār*)." After the Battle of Yamāma, someone asked: "What had al-Rajjāl done?" The people of Yamāma answered "he created a *fitna* (scandal). And it was he who testified that the Prophet had formed a partnership with Musaylima and had made authority after him."[55]

As an anti-figure, al-Rajjāl also met with the same literary fate as that of his prophet, Musaylima. He appears only in *tārīkh* literature and is wholly absent from the entries of biographical works. His name has been almost erased from memory, having been deemed underserving of inclusion among the Companions and transmitters of prophetic tradition in the later collections of biographies.

Between Loyalty and Betrayal

We owe Ibn Saʿd (230/845)[56] our thanks for including notable figures from Yamāma in his *Ṭabaqāt*. However, he limits himself only to those who opposed Musaylima, ignoring his followers. Ibn Saʿd explains further the activities of the members of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa during their stay in Medina and their further role when they returned home to Yamāma. The later biographical literature, such as the works of Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Ḥajar, and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, concentrate on the events in the mosque, where the meeting of the deputation met the Prophet and where they performed prayer together, after which the Prophet summoned them to build a mosque in Yamāma.

The following details may be added concerning the other members of the deputation.

ʿAlī b. Shaybān, one of the members of the deputation,[57] is also said to have once prayed alongside the Prophet. Perhaps due to this experience, ʿAlī transmitted a tradition about the role of prostration (*sujūd*) and bowing (*rukūʿ*) during prayer.

[54] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 58.

[55] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 59.

[56] *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* vol. 5, 549-550.

[57] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 4, 15-16; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 2, 507.

Abū Qays Ṭalq b. ʿAlī al-Ḥanafī, another member of the deputation who also prayed with the Prophet, who ordered Abū Qays to build a mosque in Yamāma.[58] It is also said that Abū Qays arrived when the Prophet was in the midst of building a mosque. Abū Qays then helped him with mixing the soil (*al-ṭīn*), due to which the Prophet praised him as "*ṣāḥib al-ṭīn* (master of the soil)."

Salmā b. Ḥanẓala is said to have been the leader of the deputation. In addition, Salmā is said to have converted to Islam and transmitted a tradition of the Prophet, which read "*Wayl libani ʿUmayya* (Woe to the faction of the ʿUmayyads)."[59].

Ibn Khaldūn presents a report as well that three people—al-Rajjāl, Ṭalq, and Salmā[n]—embraced Islam and learnt the Qurʾān from Ubay together. The story goes further that al-Rajjāl learnt to recite the Scripture, while Ṭalq memorized the calls to prayer.[60]

Ibn al-Athīr further explains the roles of the other members of the deputation, such as al-ʿAqʿaṣ b. Salama al-Ḥanafī al-Suhaymī, who participated in the erection of the mosque.[61] According to Ibn Ḥajar, al-ʿAqʿas' faith even improved (*ḥasan Islāmuh*) after the deputation. The Prophet, it is said, gave water personally to ʿAqʿas, and ordered him to build a mosque among the tribe Suḥaym. Although laughed at by his own people, al-ʿAqʿaṣ persisted in performing the task, and called them to Islam. As a result, his mission succeeded, as none of his people followed Musaylima.[62]

According to Ibn al-Athīr, Ḥumrān b. Jābir al-Hanafi, another member of the deputation, also transmitted a tradition which read "*wayl banu ʿUmayya*," stated by the Prophet as often as three times.[63]

The identity of Zayd b. ʿAbd al-ʿAmr, yet another member of the deputation, is obscure, as no other information on him can be found in the works of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn al-Athīr, or Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī.

All in all, two different perspectives might be considered in evaluating the positions of these members of the deputation: either they were seen as faithful Muslims or regarded as traitors to the prophet from their own homeland.

58 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 552-553; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 2, 332; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 3, 63-64. Ibn Khaldūn, however, tells us that Ṭalq b. ʿAlī b. Qays gave testimony to the partnership of Muḥammad and Musaylima in prophethood. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 254.

59 Ibn Khaldūn reads his name as Salmān; see his *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 254. Ibn al-Athīr presents Salma's pedigree as follows: Salmā b. Ḥanẓala al-Suḥaymī, from the tribe Suḥaym b. Murra b. al-Dūl b. Ḥanīfa. It is noteworthy that Salmā is reported have been a nephew of Hawdha b. ʿAlī (*ibn umm*). See Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 2, 342-343. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī tells us that Salmā's house was turned into a mosque in Yamāma. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 2, 70.

60 Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 254.

61 Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 1, 122.

62 Al-Asqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 60.

63 Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 1, 46; al-Asqalānī, *Iṣāba*, vol. 1, 353.

A middle ground can also be postulated that the original intention of their visit was not for the purpose of seeking a single true prophet, but rather to seek a new alliance for Yamāma, as its former alley—Sasanid Persian—had collapsed.

Interestingly, during the Battle of Yamāma, the above members of the deputation played no particular role, and mostly disappeared from Muslim sources, except for Mujjāʿa. It is likely that the positive images of the above figures were shaped by much later generations in Yamāma, who were deeply involved in Islamic tradition and who wanted to improve the picture of their ancestors.

Mujjāʿa: Between the Two Factions

Mujjāʿa[64] was part the deputation sent to Medina. Following this event, he is alleged to have dissociated himself from Musaylima, saying that "by God I do not approach Musaylima, I came to the Prophet and I converted to Islam, and I will never change."[65]

However, to infer from all the stories about him, Mujjāʿa's clear opposition to Musaylima occurred at a much later time, i.e., after the defeat of the latter. Mujjāʿa's position in this regard was unlike that of Thumāma, who had converted to Islam earlier and who did not participate in the deputation of the tribe of Ḥanīfa to Medina. Not only was Mujjāʿa a friend to Musaylima, as indicated by the fact that both participated in the deputation, but he was also among those who believed in the prophethood of Musaylima (for the story of Mujjāʿa's testimony to Musaylima's prophethood and his ambiguous position on this issue when later confronted by Khālid b. Walīd, see also chapter eleven below).

Ibn Kathīr places the story of Mujjāʿa under the heading of "the killing of Musaylima," in particular presenting accounts of the meeting of Mujjāʿa with Khālid.[66] Moreover, according to Ibn al-Athīr, Mujjāʿa and al-Rajjāl embraced Islam together, even though the latter then apostatized.[67]

Hilāl b. Sarāj, one of Mujjāʿa's grandsons, reported that the Prophet once granted his grandfather a piece of land in Yamāma (see also chapter eleven below).[68] On another occasion, Mujjāʿa, it is said, approached the Prophet

[64] Mujjāʿa b. Murrāra b. Sulmī b. Zayd b. ʿUbayd b. Thaʿbala b. Yarbuʿ b. Thaʿlaba b. al-Dūl b. Ḥanīfa. See al-Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 362; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud al-ghāba* vol. 4, 300-301. See also Hamidullah, *Life and Work* vol. 1, 306-307.

[65] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 549.

[66] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 323-325.

[67] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 2, 215.

[68] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, vol. 3, 363; al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 1, 92.

demanding a *diyya* (fine), as his brother had been killed by the people of Tamīm and Asad. The fine suggested was a hundred camels.[69]

Mujjāʿa also played a crucial role as a mediator between Khālid b. Walīd and the people of Yamāma concerning local matters (*yataḥaddath maʿah wa yasʾaluh ʿan ʿamr al-Yamāma*), and thus helped to reconcile the two parties after the war. In the end, Mujjāʿa also went to Medina as an envoy from Yamāma to Abū Bakr, who trusted Mujjāʿa as a source for the affairs in his homeland. When asked whether Mujjāʿa recited Musaylima's stanza, he answered diplomatically, "if you see [that], please forgive all."[70]

Due to his crucial role in the aftermath of the battle of Yamāma, Mujjāʿa, according to Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, received credit from the people of Ḥanīfa in the presence of Abū Bakr.[71]

Al-Balansī reports that there were good relations between Khālid and Mujjāʿa after the war. In one conversation over a meal, Khālid asked Mujjāʿa, "Let me know [this about] your friend, Musaylima. Did he recite anything to you which you still remember?" Mujjāʿa then recited some of Musaylima's verses. When asked further how he countered Musaylima, Mujjāʿa then recited Q. 87: 1, "*Sabbiḥ ism rabbik al-aʿlā* (Praise the name of your Lord, the Highest)."[72]

It seems that later Muslim writers, such as Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, attempted to improve the images of both Mujjāʿa and Khālid, maintaining their high status as Companions of the Prophet. This tendency is not found in the earlier reports, such as that of al-Ṭabarī.[73]

Other Opponents

The later literature, such as the reports of al-ʿAsqalānī based on the authority of Wathīma in his *Kitāb al-Ridda*, record the names of the people of Yamāma who opposed Musaylima and were loyal to Medina.[74] Many spoke out clearly against the apostates surrounding them, either by giving direct advice to the people or by sending reports to the authorities in Medina. There

69 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, vol. 3, 362.

70 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 550.

71 See also al-Anṣāri, *al-Miṣbāḥ* vol. 1, 92; al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 363.

72 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 73-74. See also the discussion about Musaylima's stanza *Creation* D which sounds similar to Q. 87 in chapter nine below.

73 The same tendency can also be found in the accounts provided by al-Balansī, basing himself on the authority of Wathīma b. Mūsā (d. 237 H.), that the shameful ending of the treaty of the Battle with the marriage between Khalid and Mujjaʿāh daughter did not happen. See al-Balansī, *Tārīkh* 109; Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba*, vol. 3, 363.

74 See also Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Watima's Kitab ar-Ridda aus Ibn Hagar's Isaba, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Abfalls der Araberstämme nach Muḥammads Tod* (Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissensschaften und der Literatur, 1951) 53-65.

were also people who remained Muslim, but hid their faith among the apostates, and waited for Khālid's arrival.

The following persons—Ṣaʿb b. ʿUthmān al-Suhaymī,[75] Sāʾib b. Qatāda al-Ḥanafī,[76] Muḥriz b. Qatāda b. Maslama al-Ḥanafī,[77] Naḍla b. Khālid b. Naḍla b. Mahzul,[78] ʿUqayl b. Mālik al-Ḥamirī,[79] Murra b. Ṣābir al-Yashkurī,[80] Al-Ḥubbāb b. ʿUmayr al-Salmī, [81] and Maʿmar b. Kilāb al-Zamanī[82]—are said to have spoken out openly against the apostates.

Four persons—Subhān b. Shams b. ʿAmr al-Ḥanafī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Maṭra al-Ḥanafī,[83] Abū al-Ḥuṣayn al-Ḥanafī,[84] and al-Haytham al-Ḥanafī[85]—were said to have sent reports on the progress of the apostasy to Medina:

Three people—Ḥuṣayn al-Jadhamī,[86] Sufyān b. Abī Bajra al-Jadhamī,[87]and ʿUmayr b. Ḍabbī al-Yashkūrī[88]—are reported to have been among those who concealed their faith among the apostates of Ḥanīfa; upon Khālid's arrival, they took the side of the Muslim troops or sought asylum from the general.

Two people—al-Buṭayn b. ʿAbdalla al-Ḥanafī[89] and Sufyān b. Sufyān al-Jadhamī[90]—are also reported to have remained Muslim in Yamāma.

The aforementioned people appear to have been indecisive compared to the followers of Musaylima. Of the eight people, presented in our first group,

[75] Ṣaʿb, a great shaykh in Yamāma, was previously part of the deputation of his tribe to Nuʿmān b. Mundhir in the pre-Islamic period. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 461.

[76] Sāʾib was a prisoner of war, but as a great Shaykh, he convinced everyone that he had always maintained his faith, and even had warned his people and Musaylima not to apostatize.

[77] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 6, 276.

[78] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 6, 497.

[79] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 5, 132.

[80] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 6, 286.

[81] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 2, 153.

[82] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 6, 307.

[83] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 5, 108.

[84] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 7, 97.

[85] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 6, 579.

[86] Ḥuṣayn, who lived among the apostates of Ḥanīfa, hid his faith. In pleading his innocence when Khalid came to Yamāma, he cited Q. 17: 15, which is also said to have been cited by Mujjāʿa in his meeting with Abū Bakr. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 2, 174.

[87] Sufyān who also lived among Ḥanīfa, did not apostatize. However, he reminded Khālid, not to kill too many people of Yamāma. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 125.

[88] ʿUmayr, a respected man of Yamāma and a friend of al-Rajjāl, hid his faith. ʿUmayr then went to Medina and participated in many battles, suffering many wounds. It is said that Khālid hailed him, saying that "if you were Quraysh, you must have desired the caliphal office." See al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 5, 161.

[89] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 1, 346.

[90] Al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 259.

who opposed Musaylima openly, only two of them—Sā'ib[91] and Muḥriz—originated from the same tribe as Musaylima, namely the Ḥanīfa. The rest of them stemmed from various tribes of Suhaym, Yashkūr, Kilāb, Hamir, and Salām.

On the one hand, the idealization of the opponents of Musaylima may have been the work of later literature. On the other, one can infer from the above story that the supporters of Musaylima were at one time numerous and strong, but we have no further information concerning them. This is what happens when history is written by the victors.

Yamāma after Musaylima

Having been defeated in the Battle of Yamāma, the followers of Musaylima met a very sad ending. A considerable number of them were killed in the Battle, while many who survived were executed afterwards. Many of the remaining survivors were either enslaved or driven out after seeing their villages demolished, and their rivals, the tribe Tamīm, purchase the vacant lands or simply settle on them.[92] Long after the repentance of Musaylima's followers, at the time of ʿUmar, some people of Ḥanīfa were also encouraged to emigrate to Iraq.[93]

In short, the cult of Musaylima was ruthlessly suppressed after the Battle of ʿAqraba. Everyone that knew him or subsequently knew of him felt compelled to blame him and to swear that they had never been part of his movement. Hence, the dead Musaylima started eventually to become a 'public enemy.' This, indeed, had already occurred in Medina before the Battle of Yamāma, and it continued afterwards in Yamāma (see also the discussion in chapter eight below). Unsurprisingly, all genres of Muslim literature for about a millennium and half placed him in the same position, reenacting the story in the same style, method, and fashion in *sīra*, *tārīkh*, *ṭabaqāt*, *tafsīr*, and *ḥadīth*.

The survivors of the Ḥanīfa—such as Mujjāʿa, who had the opportunity to speak under the protection of Khālid b. Walīd—publicly stated their opposition to Musaylima. Approaching Abū Bakr on behalf of his people, Mujjāʿa declared that Musaylima was a 'public enemy,' who, unfortunately, could not raise any objection from the grave. In Medina, Mujjāʿa declared his loyalty to the caliph, whom he convinced of the true repentance of the people of

91 Sā'ib's position remained unclear, as he declared his opposition to Musaylima only after being captured by the Muslim troops.

92 Askar, *al-Yamama* 35.

93 Askar, *al-Yamama* 13. Later even than this, a mass migration of the people from Yamāma to Egypt was encouraged due to their skills in mining, much needed in the latter region. See Askar, *al-Yamama* 51.

Yamāma. Everything that had been done in name of Musaylima was acknowledged as 'sin,' which they promised never to repeat.[94]

Unsurprisingly, the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Saʿd records only the Muslim survivors and newcomers to Yamāma considered to be Companions (*ṣaḥābat*) of the Prophet,[95] making them automatically free of any connection to Musaylima. Yet the later compilers of biographies, such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn Ḥajar Al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn al-Athīr, and al-Suyuṭī, recorded some of Musaylima's contemporaries and their stories in connection with their later role in transmitting the traditions of the Prophet of Medina, as we present them below.

To begin with, al-Ḥirmās b. Ziyād al-Bahilī was considered a Companion by virtue of having heard the speech of the Prophet during his childhood on the occasion of the *aḍḥā* (sacrifice) day in Mina.[96] Jāriya Abū Nimrān al-Ḥanafī was also regarded as a Companion, having transmitted a tradition on a dispute between two people over the ownership of a sack (*khussin*).[97]

In addition, two well-known figures—Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (16 H- 81/700-1) and Farazdaq (b. 20/640-d. 110/728/112/730)[98]—were also born in Yamāma. Muḥammad b. Ḥanafiyya's[99] mother, Khawla,[100] came from Yamāma. She was brought to Medina as a prisoner to the house of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. She then married ʿAlī and had a son, Muḥammad himself, who later played a leading role in the civil wars involving the Zubayrids in Damascus, the Marwānids in Medina, and the rebellious party of al-Mukhtār. Muḥammad's link to the tribe of Ḥanīfa of Yamāma was, however, insignificant compared to

[94] Ul-Haq has studied the poems which some people of Yamāma recited to express their repentance after the war. See Muḥammad Izhar ul-Haq, "Poetry of the Riddah Wars: Its Literary, Political and Religious Aspects" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana Universtiy, 1998).

[95] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol 5, 551-554.

[96] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 553; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol. 5, 57-58; Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 3, 600-601.

[97] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 553. According to Ibn al-Athīr, he was Jāriya b. Ḍafr al-Yamāmī al-Ḥanāfī, whose son, Nimrān, transmited a tradition from the father about two brothers who disputed on the ownership of a house, and not a sack. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud* vol.1, 262; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba*, vol. 1, 218.

[98] The celebrated poet Farazdaq, whose career spanned the reigns from Wālid I to Sulaymān, was descended from Mujāshi, of the Dārim group of Tamīm, a political competitor to the tribe of Ḥanīfa. See Blachère "Farazdak" in *EI²*. Ref. cited.

[99] For more on him, see F. Buhl, in *EI²*; 'Abd al-Ameer 'Abd Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate 65-86/684-705 (A Political Study)* (London: Luzac, 1971) 40; S. Husain M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shi'ah Islam* (London: Longman, 1979) 228-29, 235-37, 239-42; See Ṭabarī, *The History, Biographies of The Prophet's Companions and Their Successors*, vol. xxxix, trans. Ella Landau-Tasseron 208.

[100] Khawla bt. Jaʿfar b. Qays b. Masalma b. Ubayd b. Thaʿlaba b. Yarbuʿ b. Thaʿlaba b. al-Dul b. Ḥanīfa b. Lujaym b. Ṣāʾib b. ʿAlī b. Bakr b. Wāʾil. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha*, ed. Haṣan Tamīm (Beirut: Dār Maktaba al-Ḥayyā, 1963) vol. 1, 201.

his father's noble descent from the Quraysh and particularly from the house of Hāshim (*ahl bayt*).[101]

As indicated earlier, the tribe Ḥanīfa, during the Umayyad period, had been marginalized, but the Umayyads seemed willing to exploit the wealth of the region. Muʿāwiya owned land in Yamāma, whose cultivation depended on enslavement of the people. The members of Ḥanīfa themselves were known as both farmers[102] and slaves. Once Ziyād b. Abīh replaced Anās as governor of Khurasan with Khulayd b. ʿAbdalla al-Ḥanafī, a move that Anās answered with a contemptuous poem recalling the fate of Ḥanīfa in becoming mere slaves.[103]

In time to come, the dead Musaylima constituted a liability to his tribe. It seems that whenever someone wanted to discredit the tribe, he just recalled the embarrassing past of the false prophet.[104] It is therefore unsurprising that later generations dwelling Yamāma were also silent about their past, through which some might connect to Musaylima. Instead, they continued to transmit the traditions of the Medinan Prophet or worked as jurists (*fuqahāʾ*).[105] Nevertheless, their names, for this reason, appeared later in the biographical collections of Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī.[106]

101 Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* vol. 1, 201. For this reason, the factions of al-Mukhtār and the Shi'ites venerated him. It is said that The Prophet Muḥammad foretold the birth of Muḥammad b. Hanafiyya, saying that "if a son born among you, name him with mine; give him a nickname of my name, too." The story goes that after the death of Faṭima, wife to ʿAli and daughter of The Prophet, Khawla delivered a boy. Not only does the latter bear the same name as The Prophet Muḥammad, but he was also called Abū Qāsim similar to the nickname of The Prophet.

102 However, Askar mentions that the occupation of farmer attributed to the tribe of Ḥanīfa could also mean a privilege skill of the tribe. See his *al-Yamama* 46.

103 Al-Ṭabarī, *al-Tārīkh*, vol. 5, 286; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī vol. xviii. Between Civil Wars: The Caliphate of Muʿāwiya*, trans. Michael G. Morony (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) 163.

104 For example, in a dispute over taxation in the reign of Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Mālik, Qutayba angrily heaped scorn on the tribe: "O tribe of Bakr b. Wāʾil, o people of pretense, lying, and stinginess, during which of your two days do you boast? The day you go out to war or the day you make peace? By God, I am higher than you, O followers of Musaylima,..."

See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 509-10; *The History of Al-Ṭabarī vol. xxiv*, trans. David S. Powers (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 10.

105 Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 5, 554-556.

106 The followings are *ḥadīth* transmitters included in the list of later biographical works: Ḍamḍam b. Haws (al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325 H) vol. 4, 462); Hilāl b. Sirāj b. Mujjāʿa al-Ḥanafī, a grandson of Mujjāʿa who came as part of the deputation to the Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīs in Damascus (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 11, 81); Abū Kathīr al-Ghubarī (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 12, 211); ʿAbdalla b. Aswad al-Ḥanafī al-Suḥaymī (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 5, 154-155); Abū Salamah (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 3, 241); Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr (d. 129 /132 H) (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 11, 268-270); ʿIkrīma b. ʿAmmār (d. 159 H) (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 261-263); Ayyūb b. ʿUtba (d. 160 H), a jurist (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1, 408-10); ʿAbdalla b. Yaḥyā (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 6, 76); Muḥammad b. Jābir al-Ḥanafī (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 9, 88-90); Ayyūb b. al-Najjār al-Yamāmī (*Tahdhīb al-*

In short, Yamāma, after Musaylima, played a role no different from that of other towns in Arabia as a center for spreading the traditions of the Prophet of Medina and teaching Islam.

Constructing the 'Imagined-Musaylima'

It is perhaps of significance to conclude the discussion in chapters five, six, and seven in the following reflections. A dim portrait of an historical Musaylima with his background of the claim of prophethood might be constructed from the discussion in these chapters. From the late of sixth to the early seventh centuries the shift of religious trends in the Arabian peninsula from polytheism to monotheism played a crucial role as a broad religious milieu of religious Musaylima. The former trend was colored by paganism inherent in the various local tribal cults, while the latter was overshadowed by the traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

In light of the succession to tribal and local leadership and the decline of the sway of the Persians in Yamāma, a political Musaylima emerged. This then was perceived as threat to Medina from the time of the end of the Prophet's life to the early years of Abū Bakr's reign. After the death of Hawdha, some prominent figures of Ḥanīfa were involved in the political rivalry to take over the tribal leadership, which might enable them to control Yamāma. Apparently, the political competition was between the respective factions of Thumāma, who gained earlier support from Medina through his conversion to Islam, and Musaylima, who allied with the Tamīm (see the discussion of stanza *Tribalism* A in chapter nine below).

Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that the image of Musaylima developed in Muslim literature may well have been different from the historical Musaylima. There has clearly been some distortion of his image due to the enmity between the narrators of the story of Musaylima and the subject.

However, it is still plausible to draw the main idea of the story from the sources while exercising a certain degree of caution. Certainly, there was a Musaylima who claimed prophethood in Yamāma. For the further story, however, we have to distinguish which parts of the story bear a certain degree of authenticity and which parts are apocryphal resulting from later development at the hands of various later narrators.

Nonetheless, it seems that the writing of the story of the prophet from Yamāma was initiated by his enemies, the Muslims, as early as a century after his defeat at the Battle of Yamāma. This has serious consequences for constructing his image, which we will further illuminate in chapter eight to follow.

Tahdhīb vol. 1, 413-414); and ʿUmar b. Yūnus al-Yamāmī (d. 206 H) (*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 506-7).

Telling of the story of Musaylima features a beginning, a peak, and then a stagnant period that has continued to this day. The beginning lies, as far as we can tell, in Ibn Isḥāq's effort to explain the life of the Medinan Prophet. This coincided with effort to lay the foundation of metropolitan Baghdad as the capital of the Abbasids. With the maturity of *sīra* and *ḥadīth* scholarship, the story developed and reached its peak in the hands of Ibn Kathīr and al-ʿAynī, fuelled by a host of new transmissions. The stagnant period that followed has been characterized by repetition of the same earlier stories with the same attitude and manner. This is still to be found even in modern Muslim historical literature, which still portrays Musaylima simply as the enemy and treats the mythical and literary style of the classical scholars as historical. Thus, the treatment of Musaylima has been frozen for centuries, with hardly any attempt made to re-evaluate his image or role. The antithesis of this attitude can be seen in early Western scholarship, which held an extreme stance, taking exception to the Muslim sources.

One may also infer from reading the stories of Musaylima a shift in motivation in the production of early Muslim literature on his role. Political motivations, mixed up with theological claims, may be detected in the earliest reports, produced closer to the time when the threat of Musaylima was still felt. Apart from the execution of the followers of Musaylima in the reign of ʿUthmān, the use of Musaylima, ghostly presence—which could still be seen as a threat to the legitimacy of the caliphal office—appeared in the Umayyads. Muʿāwiya himself, according to ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān who transmitted the report, claimed to have been one of the killers of Musaylima. The hatred of the Umayyads for the people of Ḥanīfa might also be seen in the later rebelions against the caliphate, such as the Khārijite uprising under Najda b. ʿĀmir in Yamāma, who may have inherited and shared the same regional sentiment of Musaylima. Some people of Ḥanīfa, in response, expressed the same hostility towards the Umayyads, such as in transmitting the tradition which reads: "Woe to the faction of the Umayyads." Hence, Ibn Isḥāq, regarded so far as the early contributor to the story by placing Musaylima in his *sīra*, likely still sensed the threat of Musaylima as late as the early Abbasid period, apart from his historical concern in presenting the subject.

As regards positioning the subject, Musaylima's role in the deputation story seems isolated, as if he were already imprisoned (see chapter five). Following Foucault's theory, it may well be that Musaylima "is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication."[107] The powerlessness of Musaylima lies in the fact that no informant speaks on his behalf. Neither his followers nor his supporters ever dare to defend or represent him. This is not surprising, since Musaylima has only been represented

[107] *Discipline and Punish* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979) 200; Peter Dews, "Communicative Paradigms and the Questions of Subjectivity: Habermas, Mead and Lacan," in *Habermas, a Critical Reader* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000) 90.

so far by his enemies. In addition, neither Musaylima nor any of his representation ever speaks. One finds everywhere an imbalance of communication: between him and the Medinan Prophet, between him and his fellow tribemembers, and between him and the later narrators (see chapter eight below).

Negating all the strengths and advantages of Musaylima implies that the narrators wanted to cancel out, even while acknowledging his existence, if possible. However, the literature shows that they failed to do so. His challenge always haunted the early narrators in particular, and they could not set themselves free of the ghost of Musaylima. He serves also as a symbol and representation of enemy and failure. Thus, most of what has been said about Musaylima refers in effect to a pseudo-Musaylima, resulting from traumatic experiences of the enemies of Musaylima (see the fierce battle against him in chapter eleven below). Later figures from Yamāma, certainly, distanced themselves from their local prophet, part of the collective repentance of the tribe Ḥanīfa that consisted in clouding the historical Musaylima. All memory of the prophet from Yamāma had to be erased, an erasure that led to a denial of the past. The logic of the utterances of Musaylima had to be countered and the counter-argument of Thumāma advanced, i.e., that a partnership of two prophets at the same time was impossible. The distortion of Musaylima's image has been perpetuated, the more written on him, the more he is vilified. Against this backdrop, can we—as Derrida suggests—"free of being, to come beyond being",[108] suspect all dogmatism, and analyze every presupposition? Our discussion in the next chapter will try to answer this question.

▸•◂

[108] J. Derrida, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy" trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 65; Nicholas Royle, *Jacques Derrida* (London: Routledge, 2003) 44-45.

Chapter Eight

The Liars

Tell me how the deceit of those
who pretended to be prophets;
and the arch-lies of those who nominated
themselves for prophethood;
and those who did not declare their claim publicly and
those who declared and struggled;
and those who were responded to and those were not.
(al-Jāhiẓ)[1]

—"Qu'allons-nou en faire?"—Pas de réflection! copions! Il faut que la page s'emplisse, que le "monument" se complète.—égalité de tout, du bien et du mal, du Beau et du laid, de l'insignifiant et du caractéristique. Il n'y a de vrai que les phénomènes.—

--"What shall we do?"—One should not reflect! Let us copy! The page must be filled, let the "monument" complete itself—equality of everything, good and evil, the Beautiful and the ugly, the insignificant and the characteristic. The only truth is images.—
(Gustav Flaubert, *Bouvard et Pécuchet*)[2]

The following chapter will problematize the most salient label of Musaylima, namely *al-kadhdhāb* (the arch-liar), found in various genres of Muslim

[1] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-tarbīʿ wa al-tadwīr li-l-jāhiẓ*, ed. Charles Pellat (Paris: Institute Français de Damas, 1955) 75.

[2] As quoted by Elizabeth Rottenberg, *Inheriting the Future. Legacies of Kant, Freud and Flaubert* (California: Stanford University Press, 2005) 119. [mod. Mine]

literature. To do so, it will explore 'the ambiguous' definition of what constitutes a 'lie'. Comparison will be made between various accusations made against Musaylima and those made against other subjects besides Musaylima in different contexts. In line with this, some opponents of the Prophet Muḥammad—Umayya b. Abi Salṭ, Abū ʿĀmir, al-Aswad, Ṭulayḥa, and Sajāḥ, who claimed to be prophets and who earned the label of liars—will be presented. This chapter will also highlight that early *tafsīr* literature preserves the story of Musaylima, which is somehow related to the revelation of Q. 6: 93—a relationship which, however, later *tafsīr* denies.

On the Ambiguity of Accusations

Indeed, it is not easy to explain what may constitute a 'lie' nor its opposite a 'truth.'[3] Neither of the two can be easily explained without a particular context, such as: who claims that truth? Who is accused of lying?[4] On whose version of the truth are the claim and the accusation based?[5] In short, without restriction to a particular context, the word 'lie' in a certain story remains obscure to the audience.

To restrict ourselves to the discussion of the word 'lie' as found in early Muslim literature, the term *kadhdhāb* is often found in *ḥadīth* criticism, i.e., *ʿilm al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*—a science whose task is to examine the trustworthiness of *ḥadīth* transmitters.[6] The technical term has been used widely to designate whoever is reported to have forged prophetic traditions. To illustrate,

[3] For more on the basic discussion of "lie", see, for instance, D. Hughes, "Lying" in *NCE*; James Edwin Mahon, "Lying" in *EP*. For more on the basic discussion of "truth," see, for instance, A. N. Prior and Benjamin Fiedor, "Correspondence Theory of Truth" in *EP*; Keith Simmons, "Truth" in *EP*; F. E. O'farrel and J. C. Reilly, "Truth" in *NCE*. However, our investigation is not concerned with the theory of 'truth' or 'lie' in general, but rather with the specific case in Muslim literature.

[4] There is a certain danger, however, that "[a]ttributions of truth and falsehood under certain conditions generate the 'liar paradox'": Anil Gupta, "The Liar Paradox" in *EP*. See also Keith Simmons, "Truth" in *EP*.

[5] It is interesting that early narrators of the story of Musaylima, i.e. Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī were accused of being 'liars' by a few detractors. In the case of Ibn Isḥāq, the antagonism between him and the *fiqh* school of Medina seems to have played a certain role in the accusation made against him. It is known that Ibn Isḥāq once belonged to this school before moving to Ḥīra and then to Baghdad. In particular, Ibn Isḥāq is reported to have had serious adversary with Anas b. Mālik. The story goes that Anas was accused of being unreliable in his transmission, whereas Ibn Isḥāq was questioned with regard to his humble pedigree. See M. J. Kister, "The Massacre of the Banu Qurayza: a Reexamination of a Tradition" *JSAI* 8 (1986); see also W. N. Arafat, "New Light on the Story of Banu Qurayza and the Jews of Medina" *JRAS* (1976).

[6] See, for instance, "J. Robson Djarḥ wa Taʿdīl." in *EI²*; Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, *ʿUlūm al-ḥadīth wa muṣṭalaḥuh, ʿArd wa dirāsa* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 1385/1966) 109-110.

one can easily find numerous transmitters with the label *kādhib/kadhāb* in the *Kitāb Jarḥ wa Taʿdīl* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/1245).[7]

However, it is unlikely that Musaylima's label as the arch-liar refers to the above meaning, nor does it seem to occur within the same context. What is clear is that Musaylima earned the label *al-kadhdhāb* long before the birth of *ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, and the label has a different meaning in his case. However, there is also a certain parallel in both cases. The label *al-kadhdhāb* in both respects is related to that of transmitting a false 'message.' To illustrate, in *ḥadīth* criticism, the word refers to those who forged prophetic traditions. Musaylima, on the other hand, was accused of being a liar, for claiming *nubuwwa*, a word which is derived from the root *nbʾ*,[8] whose meaning has a certain relation with delivering a 'message' (*khabr*). Furthermore, Musaylima, according to various genres of Muslim literature, lied to his people by claiming to have received revelation from God, a fact, according to certain Muslim points of view, that resulted in the accusation of being a false prophet who communicated neither with God nor with the Angel (*tanabbaʾa Musaylima*). The following expression composed with words in the form of *taṣghīr* (diminutive forms), therefore, is uttered: *kānat nubayʾatu Musaylima nubayʾatu sawʾ* (a [unimportant] prophethood of [unimportant] Maslama is the [unimportant] prophethood of evil).[9]

The designation '*kadhb*' to some figures in classical Muslim literature is often ambigious. There are abundant usages and illustrations of the word *kadhb*—and its opposite *ṣidq*—found in both the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* literature. We may take the following example from the Scripture when telling the story of earlier peoples, who rejected the missions of their prophets. The following verses—Q. 12: 110; 3: 28; 39: 4; 40: 24; 54: 25-26—tell us about the people who accused their prophets of being liars. An ambiguity can be found in these accusations in which those who earned the label liars were mainly prophets, whom, at the same time, the Qurʾān describes as the holders of the truth. Another ambiguity can be found in *ḥadīth* literature, in which we also find the story of thirty claimants who were also accused of being liars (whose brief stories we will deal with in the below section). What is clear is that, in both genres of literature, these prophets earned two labels—the liars and the truth holders—at the same time.

Apart from the above ambiguity, a clear line is drawn in Muslim theology which marks the sharp difference between Muḥammad and Musaylima. *Al-ṣiddīq* (the possessor of the truth) is attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad,

7 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1372/1952). For example, Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Maṣlūb earned the label of *al-kadhdhāb*. This figure, it is reported, forged four thousand traditions. See Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, *ʿUlūm al-ḥadīth* 270 (see also our discussion on Saʿīd in below particularly n.).

8 Ibn Manẓūr, "nabaʾ" in *Lisān al-ʿarab*.

9 Ibn Manẓūr, "nabaʾ" in *Lisān al-ʿarab*.

whereas *al-kadhdhāb* is attributed to Musaylima. According to that theological claim, the Prophet is the one who brought and defended the true mission from God, whereas Musaylima was an obstacle to this mission.

Sīra literature, however, is more realistic in narrating the protagonist, the Prophet Muḥammad, who is seen from at least two different perspectives. Not only is the Prophet always viewed as *al-ṣiddīq*, he is also seen from the perspectives of those who opposed him. Consider the story of many Meccans—i.e. al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra, Umayya b. Khalaf, and Abū Jahl b. Hishām—who accused the Prophet of being a liar. In response to this, God revealed the following verse of the Qurʾān to Muḥammad: "And surely the Messengers have been mocked before you, but that which they mocked at hemmed them in (Q. 6: 10)."[10] Furthermore, *Sīra* literature often cites this verse, connecting the story of the life of the Prophet with the revelation of that verse.

Tafsīr literature, on the other hand, explains more elaborately why God revealed this verse to Muḥammad. In this regard, al-Ṭabarī asserts that the revelation of Q. 6: 10 served as a comfort (*muṣalliyan*) to the Prophet, in facing the above mockers. This means that God convinced the Prophet that he was, due to the prophetic mission he performed, vastly superior to those who merely mocked him. Moreover, what Muḥammad faced was no different than what the previous messengers had already faced. The same sins were committed by different people in different times and places, people whom God will punish, as Q. 6: 11 reads: "Say, go about in the earth, and see what was the end of those who treated the Prophets as liars."[11] Later Qurʾān exegetes—e.g.

[10] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 1, 270; trans. A. Guillaume's version in *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 181.

[11] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl al-qurʾān* ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) vol. 11, 271-273. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī Tafsīr al-maʾthūr, Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr tarjamān al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1411/1990) vol. 3, 9; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fī ʿilm al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: al-Kutub al-Islāmī, 1404/1983) vol. 3, 9; al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin al-taʾwīl* (Beirut: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1377/1958) vol. 6, 2252; al-Fayḍ al-Kāshī (d. 1091 H), *Kitāb al-ṣāfī fī Tafsīr al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Muʿassasa al-Aʿlāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 2, 110; Hūd b. Muḥakkam b. Hawwarī, *Tafsīr kitāb allāh al-ʿazīz*, ed. Ibn Saʿīd Sharīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990) vol. 1, 516. Later, Ibn Kathīr, however, continued to connect the interpretation of Q. 6: 10 with the story of the specific above Meccan mockers. See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-qurʾān al-aẓīm*, ed. Yūsūf ʿAbdarraḥmān al-Marʿashī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1407/1987) vol. 2, 129. See also the same interpretation offered by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Mawardī in his *al-Nukat wa-l-ʿuyūn: Tafsīr al-mawardī*, ed. Sayyid b. ʿAbd al-Maqsūd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1412/1992) vol. 2, 95.

al-Samarqandī (d. 375 H),[12] al-Rāzī,[13] and al-Ṭabarsī[14]—developed their commentaries by connecting this verse to various other stories of the life of the Prophet.

In view of the accounts given by *Sīra* and *tafsīr* literature above, the accusation made against the Prophet was situated in the early struggle between Muḥammad who brought God's mission, and those who rejected that mission. Thus, merely consulting a dictionary with regard to the meaning of 'lie' does not help us understand the above stories in *Sīra* and *tafsīr* literature. This is because one person is often designated with both labels—*al-ṣiddīq* and *al-kadhdhāb*—at the same time. Once again, understanding the designation of the label *al-kadhdhāb* has less to do with its literal meaning, but more with whose perspective is involved, and also with any oppositions, rivalries, or conflicts that might exist between the accusers and the accused.

Inferring from the above story, the label *al-kadhdhāb* attributed to Musaylima must have also arisen due to his rivalry in *amr* and *nubuwwa* with Muḥammad, as these two terms are mentioned in the aforementioned letter of Musaylima. In order to shed more light on this issue, we will compare Musaylima's role in the rivalry of prophethood with the role of the Prophet and with those of Umayya b. Abī Salt and Abū ʿĀmir in the following discussion.

Accusing the Opponents

According to *Sīra* literature, many political and religious figures—e.g. Abū Jahl,[15] Abū Lahab,[16] Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, and ʿAbdalla b. Sabaʿ—vehemently opposed the mission of prophethood brought by Muḥammad in both the Meccan and Medinan periods. However, we will present only two pertinent figures—Umayya b. Abī Salṭ and Abū ʿĀmir—whose rivalries with the Prophet are comparable to that of Musaylima, as they involved the matter of prophethood.

12 Abū Layth al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿAli Muḥammad Muʿawwad, ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd, and Zakariyyā ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Nūṭī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1413/1993) vol. 1, 475. Samarqandi relates the revelation of Q. 6: 10 to the story of Abū Jahl b. Hishām, who mocked The Prophet and other poor Muslims (*mustaḍʿafīn*)—such as Bilāl b. Abī Ribāḥ, Suhayb b. Sinān, and ʿAmmār b. Yāsir.

13 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār iḥyā al-Tūrāth al-Arabī, nd.) vol. 11, 162-63. Al-Rāzī relates the revelation of Q. 6: 10 to the people's demands that The Prophet must have come from angel-kind.

14 Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majmaʿ al-bayān fi Tafsīr al-qurʾān* (Qum: Manshūrāt Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 1403H/1985) vol. 7, 16.

15 See F. Buhl, "Abū Jahl" in *EI*[1]; W. M. Watt, "Abū Jahl" *EI*[2]. Ref. Cited.

16 See U. Rubin, "Abū Lahab and Sura CXI" *BSOAS* 42 (1979) 13-42; J. Barth, "Abū Lahab" in *EI*[1]; W. M. Watt, "Abū Lahab" in *EI*[2]; A. Fischer, *Der Wert der vorhandenen Koran Übersetzungen und Sura CXI* (Leipzig, 1937); T. Lohmann, "Abū Lahab (Sūrah CXI)," *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistwelt Geschichte*, 18 (1996): 326-48; R. Paret, *Der Koran, Kommentar und Konkordanz* (Stuttgart: 1971) 529.

Umayya

The story of Umayya b. Abī Salṭ can be found in *Sīra, tārīkh, tafsīr,* and *ṭabaqāt* literature, according to which, the role that Umayya played was similar to that of Musaylima in many respects. Due to their claims of prophethood, the two are regarded to be antagonistic characters to the main figure, the Prophet Muḥammad. With regard to the prophethood claimed by Umayya, on the one hand, early and later Muslim literatures undermined this figure. For example, Umayya, as a 'failed prophet,' is described to have been merely jealous of the prophethood of Muḥammad.[17] On the other hand, this literature highlights serious efforts made by Umayya to pursue some information concerning the matters of prophethood. In doing so, Umayya went to Shām to consult a monk on these matters prior to the birth of Muḥammad.[18] In this vein, these genres of literature also seem to acknowledge that Umayya had claimed prophethood earlier than Muḥammad.[19]

Nevertheless, the relation among the three prophets can be found in the story of *Basmalla*. Whereas Umayya, it is said, had revealed his own version of *Basmalla* before Muḥammad did, Musaylima's name *al-raḥmān* is preserved in the formula. However, Umayya's formula reads *bi ismik Allāhumma*, which Muḥammad later replaced with *Bi ism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*.[20]

Whereas Musaylima's stanzas are preserved by *tārīkh, iʾjāz,* and *dalāʾil* literature, poems attributed to Umayya can be found in *Sīra, adab* and *hadīth* literature.[21] Additionally, Umayya was a known poet, while Musaylima was

[17] U. Rubin, "Hanafiyya and Kaʿba: an Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of *Dīn* Ibrāhīm" in ed. F. E. Peters, *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) 278; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwat ʿUkāsha (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1960) 28; Abū al-Farāj al-Iṣbahānī, *al-Aghānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1390/1970) vol. 4, 127; al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 1, 250; Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādan al-jawhar*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Din ʿAbd al-Ḥāmid ([Cairo]: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1377/1958) vol. 1, 70-71.

[18] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh ibn khaldūn al-musammā bi kitāb al-ʿibar wa diwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar wa min ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa, 1355/1936) vol. 2, 170; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 2, 206.

[19] In addition, many genres of Muslim literature preserve the story of Umayya's miraculous signs of prophethood. Two birds, it is said, performed surgery on his breast. As with Musaylima's story, Umayya is also said to have failed to perform any miracles. By contrast, Muḥammad always succeeded in performing miracles. See Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 2, 224; al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī* vol. 4, 130-132, al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 252; Uri Rubin, *The Eyes of Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as viewed by the Early Muslims* (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995) 72-75.

[20] See Masʿūdī, *Murūj* vol. 1, 71; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 2, 211.

[21] Guillaume, *The Life* (on the victims of the battle of Badr, see p. 353; on the mourning of slaying of Zamaʿa b. Aswad, see p. 355; on the Sabaʿ and the Maʿrib, see p. 694; etc), see also the index. See also Rubin, "Ḥanafīya" 277; Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds* (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1955) 70; Sezgin, *GAS* vol. 2, 299. See also a collection of Umayya's verses by Michelle Vallaro, *Umayya Ibn Ṣ-Ṣalt Nella Seconda Parte del Kitāb az-Zahrah di Ibn Dāwūd al-Isfahānī* (Manoscritto di Torino) (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1978). See also a study in

not. It is therefore unsurprising that most Umayya's poems follow the pattern of Arabic *shiʿr*.

Having embraced another version of *ḥanīf*,[22] Umayya was involved in a serious rivalry with the Prophet Muḥammad, whose mission was also to restore that *ḥanīf*. The Prophet, it is said, forbade recitation of Umayya's poems. In turn, Umayya stood on the side of the Quraysh against Muḥammad. It appears that these two *ḥanīf* movements could not coexist. Instead, the antagonism between the adherents of both versions of *ḥanīf* was apparent. The well-known statement made by Umayya reads as follows: "I know that the Ḥanafiyya is true, but I cast doubts on [that of] Muḥammad (*ana aʿlam anna al-Ḥanafiyya ḥaqq, walakin al-shakk yudākhilnī fī Muḥammad*)."[23] Having been reluctant to either convert to Islam or to join the Muslim community in Medina, Umayya moved to Shām. After the battle of Badr, he escaped to Ṭāʾif until his death. [24]

Abū ʿĀmir

Abū ʿĀmir, whose full name is given by later Muslim sources as ʿAmr b. Sayfī b. Zayd b. Umayya b. Ḍabīʿa,[25] has more in common in many respects with the figure Umayya than he does with Musaylima, notwithstanding Abū ʿĀmir's claim of prophethood. According to the portrayal given by *sīra* and *ṭabaqāt* literature, Abū ʿĀmir was a *rāhib* (a monk) who wore a woven hair mantle, an indication that he practiced *ḥanīf*.[26] However, Abū ʿĀmir attract-

comparing the verses of the Qurʾān and Umayya's by J. Frank-Kamenerzky, *Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis der dem Umajja b. Abi ṣ Ṣalt zugeschriebenen Gedichte zum Qoran* (Kirchhain: Max Schmarsow, 1911).

22 Umayya claimed to embrace the *ḥanīf* cult, whose adherents wore a woven hair mantle (*musūḥ*). Umayya, according to the above sources, read some Scriptures and mentioned Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl, forbade wine, and proscribed worshipping idols. See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 250. According to al-Masʿūdī, moreover, Umayya's poems convey the following messages: praises of nature (earth, sky, sun, and moon), basic theological doctrines (previous prophets, resurrection day, paradise, and hell), and monotheism (glorifying God and His oneness). See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj* vol. 1, 70.

23 Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 28; al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 1, 251; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 228.

24 Suyūṭī, *Durr* vol. 3, 266-267; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 2, 210.

25 Or ibn Sayfī b. Nuʿmān b. Mālik b. Umayya b. Ḍābiʿa b. Zayd b. Mālik b. ʿAwf b. ʿAmr b. ʿAwf; see Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Istīʿāb fī maʿrifa al-aṣḥāb* (Cairo: Maktaba Nahḍa, nd.) vol. 1, 380.

26 On the describtion of Abū ʿĀmir as wearing the *musūḥ* (hair mantles), see Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957) vol. 2, 321. On Abū ʿĀmir as a *rāhib* (monk), see Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, *ʿUyūn al-athar fī funūn al-maghāzī wa shamāʾil wa siyar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Qudsī, 1356 H.) vol. 1, 221; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 2, 37; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Iṣtīʿāb* vol. 1, 380; Suyūṭī, *Durr* vol. 3, 267; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj* vol. 1, 74; trans. in French by Barbier de Mynard and Pavet de Courteille, *Les Prairies d'Or*, ed. Charles Pellat (Paris: Société Asiatique Collection d'Ouvrages Orientaux, 1962) 61. For the assumption that Abū ʿĀmir adhered to Christianity, see Wellhausen, *Reste Arabischen Heidentums, Gesammelt und Erläutert* (Berlin: Verlag von Walter de Gruyter, 1927) 239. Moshe Gil, however, argues that Abu ʿĀmir's *ḥanīf* has a greater tendency towards Manichean. This tendency can also be seen in some important

ed no significant number of followers. The attitude adopted by Abū ʿĀmir in facing Muḥammad and the Muslim community in Medina, according to the above sources, was also rather similar to that of Umayya. Abū ʿĀmir stood on the side of the Quraysh against the Prophet, a fact that became more apparent when Abū ʿĀmir joined the Meccan faction against the Muslim faction in the battle of Uhud. After the conquest of Mecca by the Muslim faction, Abū ʿĀmir fled to Ṭā'if. After the campaign of Ḥunayn, he left the Arabian peninsula. At the end of his life, Abū ʿĀmir was living somewhere either in Rūm or in Shām.[27]

The antagonism between Muḥammad and Abū ʿĀmir[28] worsened, as a few of his followers erected a mosque in Medina, which *sīra* works describe as the mosque of dissention (*masjid al-shiqār/ḍirār*), which, under the order of the Prophet, was eventually burned down.

Sīra and *ṭabaqāt* literature also records the meeting between Abū ʿĀmir and the Prophet Muḥammad, both of whom claimed their own *ḥanīf* to be the only true version, and who, unsurprisingly, accused each other's version of being false. The story goes that Abū ʿĀmir accused the Prophet of having inserted extraneous elements in the *ḥanīf* tradition (*innaka adkhalta yā Muḥammad fi al-Ḥanafiyya mā laysa minhā*). The Prophet Muḥammad, in response, claimed the purity of his *ḥanīf* (*bayḍā nāqiyya*). Abū ʿĀmir, in turn, was accused of being *al-kādhib* (the liar) and *fāsiq* (sinner).

The story of Abū ʿĀmir in later *Sīra* and *tafsīr* literature, unlike that of Musaylima and Umayya, is very much neglected. Muḥammad Riḍā, a modern Muslim writer, for instance, makes no mention of the role of Abū ʿĀmir, when he narrates the accounts of the mosque of dissent with regard to the story behind the revelation of Q. 9: 107-8. Interestingly, Riḍā tells us about twelve people who built the mosque, and three others who burnt it down under the order of the Prophet.[29] The tendency towards burying the figure of Abū ʿĀmir, in this regard, is thus apparent.

Shifting Notion in Prophethood

It appears that both Umayya and Abū ʿĀmir failed to gain any significant number of followers, a factor that leads to the failure of their mission—after their death the two claimants of prophethood were simply forgotten. Thus,

doctrines of Islam, e.g. in the finality of prophethood. See Moshe Gil, "The Medinan Opposition to The Prophet," *JSAI* 10 (1987): 87-92; "The Creed of Abū ʿĀmir" *IOS* 12 (1992): 9-57.

27 See also Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 92.

28 The story of Abū ʿĀmir can be found in the commentary of Q. 7: 175; see, Rubin, "Hanafiyya" 94; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr* vol. 3, 266-267; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 250; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* vol. 2, 221.

29 Muḥammad Riḍā, *Muḥammad rasūl allāh* (Dār iḥyā al-Kutub al-Arabīyya and ʿĪsa al-Bābī al-Ḥalibī, 1368/1949) 395-397.

the two failed to establish religious communities, due, among other things, to the lack of political leadership. In fact, both Umayya and Abū ʿĀmir were ordinary monks.

However, Musaylima, Sajāḥ, Ṭulayḥa, and Aswad—like Muḥammad—were tribal leaders whose political leadership and skills enabled them to gain and control a considerable number of followers. Having considered *sīra* and *tārīkh* literature to contain some grains of truth, we may conclude that these four prophets emerged publicly during Muḥammad's lifetime. It is likely that these claimants were inspired by the successful establishement of the Medinan *umma*. Having said that, one can speculate that there was a shifting paradigm of the notion of prophethood before and after Muḥammad in and around Ḥijāz. Prior to Muḥammad, the notion of prophethood was apparently very limited to matters related to certain practices of *kihāna* (sorcery). Apparently, these *kāhins* only produced *sajʿ* (rhyme prose) and yet did not engage in political leadership.[30] We have hundreds of poems attributed to Umayya at our disposal, but we have none from Abū ʿĀmir. After Muḥammad, however, the notion of prophethood broadened in that it involved political leadership with regard to the demands of establishing a religious community.

Al-Aswad

Al-Aswad[31]—whom *Sīra* literature pictures as a *kāhin* (soothsayer)—attempted to control the politics of Yemen.[32] His political ambition led him to march on many neighbouring areas—e.g., Najrān, Sanʿa, Hadramawt, Ṭāʾif, and Baḥrayn.[33] However, unlike Musaylima, al-Aswad never faced the Prophet Muḥammad directly. The story goes that shortly after performing a mass ritual of slaughtering camels and distributing the meat to his people, al-Aswad was killed by Fayrūz al-Daylāmī, who plotted with the prophet's own wife.[34] Upon hearing this, someone exclaimed: "I bear witness that Muḥammad is the messenger of God and that Abḥalla [Aswad] is a liar."[35] It is said that al-Aswad's rule over Yemen lasted only three or four months.[36]

30 See our discussion in prologue above.

31 See W. Montgemory Watt, "Aswad" in *EI*².

32 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 236-239; trans. F. M. Donner, *The History, The Conquest of Arabia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 34-38: "*Wa kāna al-aswad kāhinan maʿahu shaiṭān wa tābiʿun lahu.*"

33 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 229-230; trans. Donner, *The History* 22-23.

34 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 236-239; trans. Donner, *The History* 34-38.

35 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 235; trans Donner, *The History*, 32: "*Ashhadu anna muḥammad rasūl allah, wa anna abhallah kadhdhāb.*"

36 *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 239; trans. Donner, *History*, 38.

Ṭulayḥa

Two prophets—Ṭulayḥa[37] and Sajāḥ[38] whom Muslim literature also label 'liars'—annulled their claims and eventually became Muslims. For this very reason, their names appear among the list of the Companions of the Prophet in the later biographical works.

The accounts of Ṭulayḥa bear many similarities with those of Musaylima. Firstly, one of the supporters of Aswad, who sought an alliance with the tribes of Ghaṭafān and Asad, said: "it is preferable for us to follow a prophet from our two allies than to follow a prophet from Quraysh."[39] This claim sounds similar to that made by Musaylima's follower cited earlier. Secondly, the angel Gabriel is also present in the story of the revelation of Ṭulayḥa. However, the revelation claimed by Ṭulayḥa appears to be as ridiculous as that of Musaylima. For this reason, one of his own disappointed followers labelled this prophet a liar.[40] Thirdly, the tribe Asad is reported to have sent a deputation to Medina. Interestingly, a few claimed that Ṭulayḥa was among those who came to Medina.[41] Finally, having defeated Ṭulayḥa's forces, Khālid interrogated a man from the tribe Asad concerning the affairs of Ṭulayḥa, an occasion in which that man recited Ṭulayḥa's rhymes.[42] This story sounds similar to the meeting betwen Khālid and Mujjāʿa (see chapter five above; see also the discussion of stanza *Creation* D in chapter nine below).

In regard to Ṭulayḥa's repentance, he is reported to have performed *umra* (pilgrimage to the Kaʿba) during the reign of Abū Bakr. The former prophet is also said to have rendered the oath of allegiance to the second caliph ʿUmar.[43] Thus, one may infer from this story that Ṭulayḥa's threat to the two heirs of prophethood and authority—Abū Bakr and ʿUmar—ended, as these two matters—*amr* and *nubuwwa*—were admitted belonging to these caliphs. In this regard, the story of Ṭulayḥa differs sharply from that of Musaylima. The danger that Ṭulayḥa had posed was over, whereas that of Musaylima continued.

Sajāḥ

The prophetess Sajāḥ also made political efforts, whether by attacking neighboring tribes or by seeking alliances with them. Her base was the tribe of Taghlib, supported by the tribe of Hudhayl and ʿAqqāḥ. Sajāḥ also made an

37 Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Ṭulayḥa" in *EI²*; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 3, 542-543.

38 V. Vacca, "Sajāḥ" in *EI²*; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 7, 723.

39 *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 257; trans. Donner, *History* 68. On the alliance of the tribes Ghaṭafān and Asad in defending themselves against Medinan troops, see also J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen* 10-11.

40 *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 256; *The History*, trans. Donner 66.

41 Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 3, 543.

42 *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 260; trans. Donner, *The History* 73.

43 *Tārīkh* vol. 3,261; trans. Donner, *The History* 74.

alliance with Mālik b. Nuwayra[44] in order to control the whole of Tamīm.[45] As was mentioned earlier in chapter one, Sajāḥ intended to march on the tribe of Ḥanīfa, but she changed her mind and formed an alliance with Musaylima instead.

The story of Sajāḥ's prophethood is rather different from those of other prophets. Apart from the fact that she was the only woman among the prophets, al-Ṭabarī preserves a report that she was "knowledgeable about Christianity, having learned from the Christians of Taghlīb."[46] Sajāḥ's reprentence is also indicated by the account that during the reign of Muʿāwiya, she already became a good Muslim (*wa ḥasuna islāmuhā*).[47] She lived in Kūfa until her death.

Once again, Musaylima, Ṭulayḥa, Aswad, and Sajāḥ claimed to be prophets and, at the same time, pursued certain political ambitions. We may question the assumption provided by Muslim literature which suggests that these prophets merely imitated the prophethood of Muḥammad. It may well be that their strategy to achieve their mission took Medina as a model. What is clear is that hey claimed to be prophets and then consolidated their political power—either by seeking alliances from neighboring tribes or by marching on them. However, we have to maintain a certain degree of caution in reading the stories of these prophets, due to the style the *sīra, tārīkh* and *ṭabaqāt* works employ in repeating the same stories and applying them to other characters.

Various Negative Labels Attributed to Musaylima

Having mentioned the roles of Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, Abū ʿĀmir, Ṭulayḥa, Aswad, and Sajāḥ as rival prophets to Muḥammad, let us turn to that of Musaylima, which earned him many negative labels. The following sections, therefore, are devoted to the way in which *sīra*, *tārīkh*, *tafsīr*, *ṭabaqāt*, and other genres of Muslim literature present these labels.

In the Story of the Deputation

In the account of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa to Medina, preserved by Ibn Hishām, the label of 'the arch-liar' appears in the heading which reads "...*wa maʿahum Musaylima al-kadhdhāb* (...with them [the members of the

[44] Some accounts concerning Mālik reveal rather inconsistencies. Once The Prophet Muḥammad appointed him as a tax collector to the tribe Tamīm. However, Mālik is also described to have been 'a quasi apostate,' due to which he was captive of Khālid's troops which brought about his death. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd* vol. 4, 295-96; Shoufani 82-3; E. Landau-Tasseron, "Mālik b. Nuwayra" in *EI*[2]; Donner, *History* xiv-xv.

[45] See also J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen* 12-15.

[46] *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 272; trans. Donner, *The History* 93.

[47] *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 274; trans. Donner, *The History* 97.

deputation was] Musaylima, the arch-liar)." The same label appears again in the presentation of his pedigree. Additionally, the end of the story of the deputation reads, "...*irtadda ʿaduwwa Allāh tanabbaʾa wa takadhdhāba* (...the enemy of God apostatized, pretended to be a prophet and played the liar)." At first sight, the above mention of these negative labels attributed to Musaylima can perhaps be regarded as a mere stylistic device in cursing the enemy whom the narrators detest. Yet this reveals one of the reasons why Musaylima was cursed, namely because he "apostatized and declared his prophethood."[48]

Many later scholars take for granted the above heading provided by Ibn Hishām and adopt it in their works. For example, Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's heading reads: "The delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa, with them Musaylima the arch-liar." The repetition of the label attached to Musaylima can also be found elsewhere in the content of Ibn Sayyid's work.[49] Later scholars accepted the label of the arch-liar attributed to Musaylima.[50] Although, in dealing with the deputation story, al-Yaʿqūbī makes no mention of the label of the arch-liar, but he does so when narrating the battle of Yamāma.[51] Al-Ḥalabī adds a form of vituperation: "*qabbaḥahuh allāh* (may God worsen him)."[52] Ibn Saʿd writes: "*laʿanah allah*" (may God curse him) to Musaylima.[53] Al-Maqrīzī, moreover, calls Musaylima the enemy of God (*ʿaduwwallāh*).[54]

Al-Thaʿālibī relates the story about how this label *al-kadhdhāb* was initially attributed to Musaylima. The story goes that upon hearing many Medinan

[48] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra* vol. 2, 576; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 636; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 137-138; trans. Donner, *History* 95-96.

[49] Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar* vol. 2, 235-236.

[50] Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 106; al-Maqrīzī, *ʿImtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li-l-nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafada wa-l-matāʿ* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Numaysī and Muḥammad Jāmil Ghāzī (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1981) vol. 1, 364; Khalīfa b. Khayyāt al-ʿUṣfūrī, *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyād*, ed. Akrām Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Najaf: Maṭbaʿa al-Adab fī-l-Najf al-Ashraf, 1386/1967) 57; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil Afandī al-Naʿsānī (Cairo: al-Saʿāda, 1325/1906) 22-23; Al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā wa-l-rashād fī sīra khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Ibrahīm al-Tarzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUzbawī (Cairo: Wizāra Awkāf, Lajna Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 6, 496; Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-maʿād fī hady khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Miṣriyya, 1347/1928) vol. 3, 31; Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh al-khāmis fī aḥwāl anfas nafīs* (Beirut: Muʿassasa Shaʿbān, n.d.) vol. 1, 157; Ibn Taymiyya, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿUmayra (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1408/1988) 157; Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-aʿshā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1015 H.) vol. 5, 59, 381.

[51] Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964) vol. 2, 69 and 120.

[52] Al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn fī sīra al-amīn al-maʾmūn/Sīra al-ḥalabiyya* (Cairo: Musṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, n.d.) vol. 3, 155.

[53] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* vol. 1, 316. See also Ibn Hadīda al-Anṣārī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-mūḍī*, ed. Sharf al-Dīn Aḥmad Mudīr (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1396/1977) vol. 2, 346.

[54] Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafaḍa wa-l-matāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999) vol. 14, 230. See also Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa siyar*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr, 1386/1966) 270.

Muslims talk about the comparison between the Quraysh and the Ḥanīfa, which were made by Musaylima (see stanza *Tribalism* B and C in chapter nine below), the Prophet responded: "This man, whose affairs [you have talked about], is an arch-liar (*kadhdhāb*) and is among thirty liars, who will emerge before the emergence of Dajjāl" (see also the cited tradition below). Due to this, the Muslims started calling Musaylima the arch-liar.[55]

It is noteworthy that although Ibn al-Jawzī accepts the negative attributes of Musaylima from the previous reports, he adds no more new insults or curses. Ibn al-Jawzī presents the label of liar[56] only when quoting the previous reports. For example, the label is found in the al-Jawzī's quotation of the Prophet Muḥammad's answer to Musaylima[57] and in the tradition on the Prophet's dream.[58]

Al-Suhaylī, however, does not explicitly mention *al-kadhdhāb* label of Musaylima. On the contrary, al-Suhaylī highlights certain positive sides of Musaylima. According to this scholar, the name *raḥmān* attributed to this prophet from Yamāma preceded the prophethood of Muḥammad. Still, this writer tells us that Musaylima mastered magic, which enabled him to put an egg in a bottle, to heal the broken wings of a bird, to call a she-gazelle from a mountain to be milked.[59] In addition, according to the report recorded by al-Diyārbakrī, Musaylima also mastered astrology.[60] Interestingly, Ibn al-Athīr makes no mention of the label *al-kadhdhāb* attributued to Musaylima in at least two accounts—the deputation story and in the battle of Yamāma.[61]

However, at the hands of many later Muslim writers, such as al-Dhahabī[62] and Ibn Kathīr, various labels attributed to Musaylima—e.g. *al-kadhdhāb, aduwwallāh,* and *la*ʿ*natullāh*—accumulate. Not only do they take these negative attributes of Musaylima for granted without question, they also add many new ones. In many instances, these writers mention all of these labels at once. For example, Ibn Kathīr's heading reads: "the story of Thumāma and the

55 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 91.

56 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Wafā bi aḥwāl al-muṣṭafā*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Wāḥid (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, n.d.) vol. 2, 757-8.

57 Jawzī, *al-Wafā* vol. 2, 763.

58 Jawzī, *al-Wafā* vol. 2, 764.

59 Al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unūf fī Tafsīr al-sīra al-nabawiyya li ibn hishām*, ed. Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Rawf Saʿd (Cairo: Maktaba al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, n.d.) vol. 4, 225. See also Muṭṭahar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʾ wa-l-tārīkh* (Baghdad: al-Muthannā, 1916) vol. 5, 160; Al-Ḥalabī, *Insān* vol. 3, 256.

60 Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh* vol. 1, 159.

61 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 296, 360-367.

62 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *al-Maghāzī*, 682-686.

deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa, [among the members of the deputation] was Musaylima the arch-liar whom God may curse (*al-kadhdhāb laʿanah allāh*)."[63]

In addition to the above labels, many Muslim works denigrate Musaylima with regard to his teachings, which are said to have permitted his people to drink wine and to fornicate, and which are also said to have reduced the number of prayers.[64] In the story of Musaylima's death, discrediting elements can also be felt. Al-Jāḥiẓ, for instance, includes Waḥshī in his list of the virtuous black people (*manāqib al-sawdān*). This is due to the well-known claim made by Waḥshī that he killed the best man, namely Ḥamza b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭallib, and the worse man, namely Musaylima.[65]

In the Sayings of the Prophet

According to *ḥadīth* literature, it was the Prophet Muḥammad himself who originally attributed the label of the-arch liar to Musaylima. As indicated in chapter two, the Prophet mentions this in his answer to Musaylima's letter. Additionally, the Prophet also said that "I testify, by the amount of the sand grains in the desert and on the grave, that Musaylima is a liar."[66]

The *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq—Ibn Hishām also preserves the following tradition:

> I saw the night of *al-qadr* and then I was made to forget it; and I saw on my arms two bracelets of gold which I disliked so I blew on them and they flew away. I interpreted it to mean these two liars, the man of al-Yamāma and the man of al-Yaman."[67]

[63] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Wāḥid (Cairo: 1386/1967) vol. 4, 92.

[64] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 576; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 636; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 137-8; *History* trans. Donner 95-96. See also Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar* 270; al-Ḥalabī, *Insān* vol. 3, 155; Shāmī, *Subul* vol. 6, 497.

[65] Enderwitz, *Gesellschaftlicher Rang und ethnische Legitimation. Der arabische Schriftsteller Abū ʿUṯmān al-Ǧāḥiẓ über die Afrikaner, Perser und Araber in der islamischen Gesellschaft* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1979) 51; Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil Al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī, 1384/1964) 180.

[66] Another version reads, "...by the number of the dust of the world." See Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rawf al-Munāwī, *Fayd al-qadīr, Sharḥ al-jāmiʿ al-shaghīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1391/1972) vol. 3, 20.

[67] Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 600; trans. Guillaume, *The Life* 648. See also al-Bukhārī , *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. Maghāzī* 72 vol. 2, 872-873; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Liechtenstein: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000) *k. al-Ruʾyā* 5 vol. 2, 982; Ḥākim Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalā-l-saḥīḥayn fi al-aḥādīth* (Riyad: Maktaba wa Maṭābiʿ al-Naṣr li-l-Ḥadīth, n.d.) vol. 4, 398.

In addition, according to Abū Hurayra,[68] the Prophet also said that "the Hour will not come until thirty antichrists come forth, each of them claiming to be a prophet."[69]

Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī records the following tradition which contains a warning of the danger of the Antchrist and that of *al-kadhdhābs*:

> People had talked a great deal about Musaylima, before the Prophet himself addressed this issue. During his speech, the Prophet touched upon it clearly, as he said: 'You all have already talked a lot about the matters related to this man. He is, indeed, *kadhdhāb*, among thirty *kadhdhābs*, who will emerge before the emergence of Anti-chirst (*Dajjāl*). There is no country that he will not go through and even to every corner, with the exception of Medina. People will then be frightened. Eventually two angels will drive him away.'[70]

In the Headings of the Story of the Battle of Yamāma

In narrating the Battle of Yamāma, al-Ṭabarī provides the following heading: "Remainder of the Story of Musaylima the arch-liar and his Tribe of the People of Yamāma."[71] Thus, the label of the arch-liar is clearly stated. Many later scholars[72]adopt the heading in their works.

Ibn Khayyād, however, leaves out '*al-kadhdhāb*', as can be seen in the following heading: "Report on Yamāma/*khabr al-Yamāma*."[73]

68 In view of Abū Hurayra's role in transmitting the story of Musaylima, one may speculate the following. First, Abū Hurayra had acquaintance with al-Rajjāl in Medina (see chapter seven), before the latter returned to Yamāma to support Musaylima's faction. Secondly, Abū Hurayra served as a governor of Yamāma under the reign of ʿUmar. It remains uncertain, however, whether Abū Hurayra himself transmitted the above traditions or whether later transmitters played a part in attributing them to his authority.

69 Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* vol. 2, 600; Guillaume, *The life* 648.

70 Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 4, 541. As regards the *isnāds* of the above traditions, the dream motif has two strands, whereas the Anti-Christ motif has a single strand only. The dust motif above seems *gharīb* (no similar version is found). At first sight, it is difficult to accept the reliability of these traditions. However, we do have no less than four traditions, which all realte that it was The Prophet himself who attributed the label of *al-kadhdhāb* to Musaylima.

71 *Tārīkh*, vol. 3, 281; *The History*, trans. Donner, 105.

72 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, *ʿAhd al-khulafā al-rāshidīn* 38. The heading reads: "War against Musaylima the arch-liar". See also Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt ibn ḥubaysh/Kitāb al-ghazawāt al-ḍāmina al-kāmila wa-l-futūḥ al-jāmiʿa al-ḥāfila al-kāʾina fī ayyām al-khulafāʾ al-awwal al-thalātha: Abī bakr al-ṣiddīq wa abī hafṣ ʿumar wa abī ʿamr dhī al-nūrayn ʿuthmān*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992) vol. 1, 51. The heading reads "Story of Musaylima the arch-liar and the Apostasy of the People of Yamāma." See also Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda, Iqtabasa min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970) 56. The heading reads: "A Story of Musaylima the Arch-liar and the Apostasy of the People of Yamāma." See also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975) vol. 19, 85. The heading reads: "Mentioning the story of Musaylima the Arch-liar and his People of Yamāma."

73 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt al-ʿUṣfūrī, *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyād*, ed. Akrām Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Najaf: Maṭbaʿa al-Adab fī-l-Najf al-Ashraf, 1386/1967) vol. 1, 72. See also Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 360. The heading reads: "Mentioning Musaylima and the People of Yamāma."

It is noteworthy that not every report preserved by al-Ṭabarī shows only the negative sides of Musaylima. This can be seen in the teachings of Musaylima presented by al-Ṭabarī. To illustrate, the way that Musaylima performed his prayers were similar to the way Muslims did. Before holding the prayers, a caller for prayer—whom al-Ṭabarī mentions as ʿAbdalla b. Nawwāḥa and Hujayr b. ʿUmayr[74]—performed his duty.

It seems that the above story, preserved by *tārīkh* literature, provides a rather exegetical explanation to the earlier account found in the deputation story, preserved by *sīra* literature. The accounts in *tārīkh* works provide a more detailed explanation in that Musaylima reduced the number of prayers during his meeting with Sajāḥ. This meeting, according to these accounts, involved sexual relations between the two prophets. Moreover, it is said that the reduction of the number of prayers was part of the dowry which the prophet of the Ḥanīfa gave to the prophetess of the Tamīm before their marriage. Musaylima, it is also said, dropped two prayers, *Fajr* (morning) and *ʿIshāʾ* (night).[75]

The following is the way in which Ibn Shiḥna narrates the story of the affairs of two prophets:

> In the days of Abū Bakr, Sajāḥ bt. al-Ḥārith b. Suwayd al-Tamīma claimed prophethood. The tribe of Tamīm obeyed her. Her seclusion was in Taghlīb. Musaylima the arch-liar wanted [to sleep with her]. She then slept with him for three days and [of course] both committed adultery. This Musaylima came to the Messenger of God [may God bless and give peace be upon him], and then he apostatized. He claimed prophethood in Yamāma independently, then associated himself with the Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him].[76]

What distinguishes the above portrayal given by Ibn Shiḥna from the previous accounts is the following. Ibn Shiḥna contrasts the *al-kadhdhāb* of Musaylima to al-*ṣiddīq* of Abū Bakr. Additionally, the label is related to the adultery committed by Musaylima with Sajāḥ.[77]

In other Contexts

As seen above, the label *al-kadhdhāb* attributed to Musaylima is found in numerous genres of Muslim literature. To begin with, an early Muslim writer, Ibn Qutayba, already mentioned this label—and another label *ṣāḥib nīranjāt* (a magician)—in his *al-Maʿārif*. The following poem, also preserved in *al-Maʿārif*, lampoons the 'misguided' Musaylima:

[74] *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 283; trans. Donner, *The History* 107-108; See also Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt* vol. 1, 56. Interestingly, a similar story can also be found in the accounts of Sajāḥ, whose caller for prayer is said to have been Shabath b. Ribʿī al-Riyāḥī.

[75] See Diyārbakrī, *Tārīkh* 159.

[76] Ibn Shiḥna, *Rawḍ al-manāẓir fī ʿilm al-awāʾil wa-l-awākhir*, ed. Muḥammad Muhannā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1417/1998) 101.

[77] See also Abū al-Fidāʾ, *Kitāb al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Ibrāhīm Kāmil al-Zayn and Adīb ʿĀrif al-Zayn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1375/1956) vol. 2, 65.

How sorrowful you are O Abū Thumāma[78]
Sorrowfull in the corner of Tihāma[79]
How many signs you have [shown to the] people
[Hoping for] the sun to rise from behind a dark cloud.[80]

Abū al-ʿArab Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī (d. 333 H.), however, does not add *al-kadhdhāb* when mentioning Musaylima.[81] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd agrees with those who do not fanatically mention the label of "arch-liar" whenever mentioning Musaylima.[82] Al-Suyūṭī, interestingly, mentions the arch-liar label of Musaylima once with regard to the interpretation of Q. 6: 93. However, in the rest of al-Suyūṭī's explanation, the label disappears.[83]

Al-Masʿūdī, on the other hand, broadens the meaning of *al-kadhdhāb*, which, according to Masʿūdī, does not exclusively belong to Musaylima. The same title was also attributed to al-Ansī, as well as to Sajāḥ who is called 'the she-liar' (*mukadhdhiba*). Interestingly, Musaylima's origin is added after the label, which then reads *Kadhdhāb al-Yamāma*.[84] Al-Masʿūdī, however, is not consistent in attributing the arch-liar label to Musaylima; sometimes al-Masʿūdī mentions it, such as in Musaylima's pedigree—in narrating the battle of Yamāma, however, the label disappears.[85]

According to Ibn Khaldūn, "the arch-liar" is the label that should be attributed to all claimants after Muḥammad. To present Ibn Khaldūn's narration:

> Having performed the Farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him] took a rest. However, he complained (of his pain). The news about this then spread. Al-Aswad in Yaman took the [opportunity to claim prophethood] as mentioned; Musaylima in Yamāma and Ṭulayḥa b. Khuwaylid from the tribe Asad did likewise. All of these proclaimed prophethood. The Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him] battled them by sending emissaries and letters and exhorting the people who remained faithful [Muslims] in their tribes to perform *jihād*. It worked in the case of al-Aswad,

[78] Musaylima's nickname.

[79] It reads either as *Tihāma*—which means southern shores of the Arabian Peninsula—or *shamāma*—which means nobility or proudness.

[80] Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* 405; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar* vol. 2, 236; al-Ḥalibī, *Insān al-ʿUyūn* vol. 3, 256; Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1408/1988) vol. 4, 378; al-Suhaylī, *Rawḍ al-Unuf* vol. 4, 225.

[81] Yet Yaḥyā Wāhib al-Juburī, the editor of Aḥmad al-Tamīmī's work, seems to be responsible for inserting the label in the footnotes and index. See Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Tamīm al-Tamīmī, *Kitāb al-miḥan*, ed. Yaḥyā Wāhib al-Jabbūrī (n.p.: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1403/1983) 151, 170, 343.

[82] Ibn Abi al-Ḥadīd (505-586), *Sharh nahj al-balāgha*, ed. Ḥasan Tamīm (Beirut: Dār Maktaba al-Ḥayyāh, 1963) vol. 1, 127, 201, vol. 5, 146, 151.

[83] Suyūṭī, *Durr* vol. 3, 56.

[84] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj* vol. 2, 310. Interestingly, al-Masʿūdi simply turns the title of *raḥmān al-yamāma* into *kadhdhāb al-Yamāma*.

[85] Al-Masʿūdi, *al-Tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf* , ed. ʿAbdalla Ismāʿīl al-Ṣāwī (Baghdad: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1357/1938) 239, 247, 248.

> [as he was killed] a day before his [Prophet's] death. The [Prophet's] pain did not distract him from the duty given by God to defend His religion. The [Prophet] also sent many Arab Muslims to many areas where the [above] arch-liars (*kadhdhābīn*) lived. [The Prophet] also ordered the [Muslims] to perform *jihād* against them [the arch-liars].[86]

Similar to the way in which Ibn Khaldūn understands the label arch-liar, al-Nuwayrī's heading reads: *Dhikr akhbār man iddaʿā al-nubuwwa min al-kadhdhābin wa mā kāna min amrihim* (Mention of those who claimed prophethood, the arch-liars, and the matters related to them...). On another occasion, however, al-Nuwayrī treats the label arch-liar in a special way in which he attributes this label only to Musaylima. The rest of the claimants, according to al-Nuwayrī, do not deserve the label. To quote his words:

> During the lifetime of the Prophet [may God bless and give peace be upon him] three persons claimed prophethood: Al-Aswad al-Ansī, Ṭulayḥa al-Asadi, and Musaylima *al-Kadhdhāb*. In addition to [these three], Sajāḥ bt. al-Ḥārith the Tamīmī also claimed prophethood.[87]

An ardent defender of the *ẓāhirī* school, Ibn Ḥazm takes the designation of Musaylima literally. Ibn Ḥazm persistently mentions the label whenever mentioning Musaylima's name. To illustrate, in narrating Musaylima's marriage with Sajāḥ, Ibn Ḥazm confers upon him two labels at the same time: *al-kadhdhāb* and *laʿanahullāh* (may God curse him),[88] labels that also occurs in telling the story of Musaylima's other marriage with Kaysa bt. al-Ḥārith.[89] It is also interesting to see how Ibn Ḥazm presents the story of Ḥabīb b. Zayd from the tribe of Najjār, an emissary sent by Muḥammad to Musaylima and whom Musaylima killed. Due to this act, Musaylima is described as the one "whom God cursed", whereas Ḥabīb is the other "with whom God is pleased."[90]

In his *Sīra*, Ibn Ḥazm accuses all the negative labels of Musaylima, such as 'the arch liar', 'the curse of God', and 'the enemy of God',[91] a fact that may lead us to conclude that cursing Musaylima seems to be a necessity for Ibn Ḥazm, who often accuses Musaylima explicitly of being "the enemy of God who pretended to be a prophet and apostasized." By contrast, Musaylima's rival, Thumāma b. Uthāl, according to Ibn Ḥazm, was the one "upon whom

86 Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn al-musammā bi kitāb al-ʿibar wa dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar wa min ʿāṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa, 1355/1936) vol. 2, 266.

87 Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* vol. 19, 49.

88 Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿarab lī abī muḥammad ʿalī b. saʿīd b. ḥazm al-andalūsī*, ed. É. Lévi Provençal (Cairo: al-Maʿārif, 1948) 68.

89 Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat* 293.

90 Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat* 332-3.

91 Ibn Ḥazm (384-456), *Jawāmiʿ al-sīra wa khams rasāʾil ukhrā*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, [1956]) 11, 340, 341, 166 and 339.

God bestows content", or the one who "affirms his faith in Islam."[92] Additionally, Ibn Ḥazm also contrasts the figure of Musaylima *al-kadhdhāb* to that of Abū Bakr *al-Ṣiddīq*.[93]

In Classical Exegesis

Unlike Abu Lahab's name which Q. 111 preserves, nowhere does the Qurʾān record Musaylima's. Rather, the story of Musaylima resembles that of Abū ʿĀmir and Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, which can be found in *tafsīr* literature. Many early exegetes of the Qurʾān relate the story of Musaylima to the interpretation of Q. 6: 93 which reads:

> *Man aẓlam mimman iftarā ʿala allāh kādhiban—aw qālā ūḥiya ilayyā wa lam yūḥa ilayh shayʾ—wa man qālā saunzila mithla mā unzila Allāh...*
>
> Who is a greater wrongdoer than he who forges lies against God—or who said: I am given revelation, he is not—and who said: I will send down the like of that which God had sent down.

To begin with, al-Ṭabarī presents two figures—Musaylima and ʿAbdalla b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarh of the tribe ʿĀmir b. Luʿay, who once had served as a secretary of the Prophet before he apostasized from Islam—both of whom the above verse originally lampooned. [94] Al-Suyūṭī presents nine riwayas[95] in support of al-Ṭabarī, whereas Al-Mawardī presents five versions, where the figures of al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith and al-Ansī were also related to the revelation of Q. 6: 93 above. [96] Al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427), likewise, agrees with the above interpretation in that the revelation of Q. 6: 93 was related somehow to the affairs of Musaylima and ʿAbdalla b. Saʿīd b. Abī Sarḥ al-Qurshī. [97] Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468), on the other hand, preserves two reports which support that Q. 6: 93 refers only to the affairs of ʿAbdalla. [98]

It is al-Rāzī who offers a wider interpretation of Q. 6: 93, instead of merely consider the occasion of the revelation. He still considers the significance of the earlier reports about the affairs of al-Aswad and Musaylima. Al-Rāzī, however, calls on the exegetes to hold the principle that "*al-ibra bi umūm al-lafẓ lā bi khuṣūṣ al-sabab*/lesson should be taken from a general meaning and not be restricted to the particular occasion." For al-Rāzī, therefore, whoever committed a lie in the three matters—*dhāt* (essence), *ṣifāt* (attributes), and

[92] Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmiʿ* 259.

[93] Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmiʿ* 258.

[94] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* vol. 11, 532-538.

[95] Al-Suyūṭī, *Dūr* vol.3, 55-56.

[96] Al-Mawardī, *al-Nukāt wa-l-ʿuyūn* vol. 2, 143-144.

[97] Al-Thaʿlabī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān/Tafsīr al-thaʿlabī*, ed. Abī Muḥammad b. ʿAshūr, Naẓir al-Sāʿidī (Beirut: Dār iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1422/2002) 169-170.

[98] Al-Wāḥidī al-Nīsābūrī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thaqāfiyya, n.d.) 126.

afʿāl (deeds)—can be included in the lampoon of Q. 6: 93. To illustrate, he takes the cases of the anthropomorphism (*mujassima*) and the fatalism/predeterminism (*mujbira*) as examples, with regard to their misleading theological beliefs.[99]

Al-Thaʿālibī shares the principle that al-Rāzī proposes, with regard to the interpretation of Q. 6: 93. Notwithstanding the stories of Musaylima, al-Aswad al-Ansī, ʿAbdalla b. Abī Sarḥ, and Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, the interpretion of Q. 6: 93, according to al-Thaʿālibī and al-Rāzī, should be carried out as broadly as possible in a way that enables the interpreter to include anyone who commits sinful deeds. Unsurprisingly, al-Thaʿālibī includes later figures—i.e. al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd—whose sinful acts, according to al-Thaʿālibī, the verse also lampoons.[100]

Not all later exegetes, however, agree with the above principle that al-Rāzī and al-Thaʿālibī hold. Al-Ṭabarsī, for instance, later presents the summaries of the earlier reports, i.e. those whose authority is based on ʿIkrima, Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid, al-Ṣādī, al-Firā', al-Zajjāj, and al-Jubbā'ī. Accordingly, al-Ṭabarsī still understands the lampoon of Q. 6: 93 as referring to the specific affairs of Musaylima and ʿAbdalla b. Abī Sarḥ.[101]

It is interesting to see the way in which Ibn Kathīr comments on Q. 6: 93. First, according to him, those whom Q. 6: 93 lampoons are anyone who acts against God. In this regard, Ibn Kathīr refers this case to those who make associations for Him and perceive Him as having a son (*shirk/mushrikūn*). This interpretation certainly is another attempt to broaden the meaning of Q. 6: 93. Secondly, Ibn Kathīr still relates the story of Musaylima. Finally, the lampoon of Q. 6: 93, Ibn Kathīr says, also refers to anyone who makes efforts to imitate the Qur'ān, which is another effort that Ibn Kathīr made to broaden the interpretation of the above verse.[102]

In Modern Exegesis

Broadly speaking, later exegetes of the Qur'ān follow the principles that al-Rāzī, al-Thaʿālibī, and Ibn Kathīr already proposed. That is, they tend to broaden the meaning of Q. 6: 93, rather than to restrict their interpretation to the occasions of the revelation. Al-Qāsimī, for instance, mentions specifically the doctrine of Trinity in his commentary. Additionally, ʿAmr b. Luhay, who is said to have attempted to change the law of God, can also be included in those whom Q 6: 93 lampoon. According to al-Qāsimī, *rabbāniyūn* (Jewish

[99] Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr* vol. 7, 83-84.

[100] Al-Thaʿālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān fi Tafsīr al-qur'ān*, ed. ʿAmmār al-Ṭālibī (n.p.: al-Muʿassasa al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Kitāb, 1985) vol. 1, 648.

[101] Al-Ṭabarsī, *Tafsīr* vol. 7, 132.

[102] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* vol. 2, 162.

clerics)—who believed mistakenly that God still addressed them—can also be included in that sinful group.[103]

In interpreting Q. 6: 93, ʿAbduh and Riḍā, moreover, mention the practices of polytheism—a matter of which Q. 6: 93, Q. 6: 21; 10: 15; and 16, 17 also clarify. In addition, relying on al-ʿAlūsī, ʿAbduh further broadens the meaning of Q. 6: 93, also assigning its lampoon generally to those who negate the revelation of God (*inkār waḥy*), a sinful act that those who spoke incorrectly about the law of God (*sharʿī, taḥlīl,* or *taḥrīm*) have committed.

It is ʿAbduh who boldly rejects the above reports of ʿIkrima and Qatāda regarding the connection of Musaylima and al-Ansī to the revelation of Q. 6: 93. With reference to Ibn al-Athīr's *tārīkh*, ʿAbduh argues that the claims made by both false prophets occurred in the late Medinan period (10 H). Thus, it is misleading, according to ʿAbduh, to relate the revelation of Q. 6: 93—which had been revealed in Mecca prior to their claims—to these false prophets.

Furthermore, ʿAbduh casts doubts on the reliability of the story of ʿAbdalla b. Abī Sarḥ with regard to the revelation of Q. 6: 93. Instead, according to ʿAbduh, the revelation of this verse was originally related to Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith who challenged the Qurʾān as containing nothing more than many common tales about earlier peoples (*asāṭir al-awwālīn*). Furthermore, in rejecting the story of ʿAbdalla b. Abī Sarh, ʿAbduh argues as followṣ. ʿAbdalla is said to have changed the phrase *ʿazīz ḥakīm* to *ghafūr raḥīm* (i.e. Q. 31). According to ʿAbduh, however, there is no indication whatsoever that both phrases were revealed in Mecca. Likewise, the phrases which sound *samīʿ ʿalīm, ʿalīm ḥakīm*, and *ʿazīz ḥakīm* do not belong to the Meccan style, with the exception of similar words found in *sūra* Luqmān/31.

It is also reported that upon hearing the following reading from the Prophet—*laqad khalaqnā al-insān min sulālatin min ṭīn* (Indeed, we created man out of the essence of clay)—,ʿAbdalla was astonished and spontaneously exclaimed: "*fatabārak allāh aḥsan al-khāliqīn* (Exalted be God, the best of creators (al-Muʾminūn/49))." Surprisingly, the Prophet said: "That is what had been revealed to me (*ha kadhā unzilat ʿalay*)." This then led to ʿAbdalla's doubts on the Prophet's mere repetition of his words. Yet this story, according to Abduh, is unreliable.[104]

In line with ʿAbduh, al-Marāghī also broadens the meaning of Q. 6: 93, which, according to him, lampoons anyone who acts against God. The affairs of Musaylima, al-Aswad, and Ṭulayḥa, serve only as examples of those who opposed the mission of the Prophet. Many more challengers to the truth

[103] Al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin al-taʾwīl* vol. 6, 2415-2416.

[104] Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-manār* (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1367) vol. 7, 622-625.

often appear in the history of man (*fī ayy zamān kāna*), all of whom the above verse includes in its lampoon.[105]

On the other hand, Sayyid Quṭb renders a new meaning for Q. 6: 93. In doing so, Quṭb seems boldly to pass over the stories of Musaylima, Ṭulayḥa, and ʿAbdalla. In this regard, Quṭb rather describes many modern sinners who will be punished with "the humiliating punishment." They, according to Quṭb, will suffer from 'total misery and depression' due to their own sinful deeds.[106]

A modern Indonesian exegete, Hamka, also broadens the interpretation of Q. 6: 93. According to Hamka, there is a parallel, somehow, between the practices of polytheism and the claims of 'false' prophethood. Both acts, Hamka says, are *ẓulm* (sinful deeds), because both of those who committed these deeds already attempted to cross the boundaries of God. Hamka also relates the lampoon of Q. 6: 93 to the modern claimants—al-Bāb with his Bābiyan movement, Mirza Ali Muḥammad in Iran, "Baha-ulla" with his Baha'i, and Mirza Ghulam Aḥmad with his Ahmadiyya.[107]

To conclude, in view of the above commentaries offered by both early and later exegetes, substantial differences can be found between them. Whereas the early exegetes of the Qurʾān preserve the stories of early claimants of prophethood and relate the story of these figures to the revelation of Q. 6: 93, later exegetes deny the relationship of that verse and the story of these figures. It is obvious that many early exegetes mention that it was Musaylima who challenged Muḥammad, a challenge in which Musaylima boasted to be able to produce a revelation like the Qurʾān. On the contrary, later exegetes assert that Q. 6: 93 refers to broader and more universal meanings.

The tendency towards universalizing the meaning of Q. 6: 93 can be found as early as the above effort made by al-Rāzī. This verse, according to him, lampoons anyone who 'lies' and 'acts against God.' Many later exegetes accept this principle, according to which the historical background of the revelation of Q. 6: 93 no longer play a vital role in its interpretation. The blatant agenda of these exegetes is to find 'universal meaning.' In this regard, radical rationalization characterizes ʿAbduh's commentaries. Due to the way in which later exegetes treat Q. 6: 93, Musaylima has become an archetypical figure and symbol of anyone who acts against God, regardless of the time and place. In short, the existence of Musaylima as a historical person, in many instances, has been undermined.

Having considered Q. 6: 93 to have been revealed in Mecca, ʿAbduh and Riḍā denied the direct relation of the story of Musaylima to the revelation of this verse. In fact, for ʿAbduh, Musaylima claimed prophethood in the Medi-

[105] *Tafsīr al-marāghī* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1365/1953) vol. 7, 192-193.

[106] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī ẓilāl al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿArabīyya, n.d.) vol. 7, 276-277; trans. Adil Salahi, *In the Shade of the Qurʾān* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2002) vol. 5, 238-239.

[107] Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983) vol. 7, 281-285.

nan period. The later exegetes of the Qur'ān, ʿAbduh therefore says, must have inserted the story of Musaylima in their commentaries. Richard Bell also agrees with ʿAbduh in that the story of Musaylima and other false prophets resulted from later *tafsīr* literature. In fact, according to Bell, Q. 6: 93 originally related, somehow, to the Jews who "regarded their oral law as divine. [The] word *ẓālimūn* usually refers to Jews."[108] Both Abduh and Bell agree with the periodization of the *sūra* according to al-Suyūṭī, who considers Q. 6 to be Meccan revelation.[109] In contradistinction, Nöldeke rather suspects that Q. 6: 93 was revealed during the Medinan period, although Q. 6 in general had been revealed in the Meccan period. In this regard, Nöldeke takes the relationship between the revelation of Q. 6: 93 and the story of Musaylima and ʿAbdalla b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ into account.[110]

I, however, would argue that none of the speculations of the above scholars is acceptable. ʿAbduh, Bell, and Nöldeke, denied Musaylima's early claim of prophethood. Whereas ʿAbduh does this in order reject the role that Musaylima might have played with regard to the revelation of the Qur'ān, Bell does this due to his suspicious attitude to the later roles of any exegete of the Qur'ān. Nöldeke, on the other hand, acknowledges the role of Musaylima with regard to the Qur'ān's revelation. However, Nöldeke dates this occurance later in the Medinan period. I would argue that this relation between Musaylima and the Qur'ān's revelation occurred in the Meccan period, as I argued elsewhere that Musaylima claimed prophethood as early as Muḥammad. Indeed, there was a certain relationship between both prophets in revealing their divine messages to their people. The fact that both were also active in delivering guidance to their people leads us to conclude that the two prophets challenged each other in delivering their Qur'ān, a rivalry that began during the early Meccan period (for the later rivalry between the two Qur'āns during the war of Yamāma, see chapter eleven below).

Remainder of the Legacy

Unlike modern exegetes of the Qur'ān who are able to reduce the role of Musaylima with regard to his story related to the revelation of Q. 6: 93, it is

[108] Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur'ān*, ed. C. Edmund Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991) vol. 1, 198. As with his treatment of other sūras of the Qur'ān, Bell also divides Q. 6 into several parts and gives each part different dating of the revelation. He considers Q. 6: 93 to have been revealed in the Meccan period.

[109] Al-Suyūṭī considers the whole *sūra* 6/*al-Anʿām* as Meccan revelation, with exception of verses 151-153, which he considers as Medinan revelation. See his *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-qur'ān*, ed. Fawwāz Aḥmad Zamarlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1421/2001) vol. 1, 57. See also, al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-qur'ān*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1408/1988) vol. 1, 249; al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-ʿirfān fī ʿulūm al-qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1372 H) vol. 1, 191-192.

[110] See his *Geschichte des Qorans*, ed. Friedrich Schwally (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961) vol. 1, 161-162.

difficult for modern *Sīra* writers to deny his role.[111] That is, they have to deal with Musaylima whenever talking about Muhammad's prophethood. Against this backdrop, later writers of *sīra* and other genres of modern Muslim literature have continued the stance of their predecessors in rejecting Musaylima's prophethood. In many instances, they renew the validity of the accusation that Musaylima was 'the arch-liar.'

Balyuzi, for example, says: "After the passing of Muḥammad, Musaylima, the false prophet, rose up in Yamāma to claim the right of lordship over the Arabians,...". The intention behind the claim, according to Balyuzi, was simply to "break the power of Islam."[112]

Muḥammad Ali also subscribes to the same view that "The Banu Hanifa, of which tribe came Musailma [sic!], the impostor, lived there."[113] Ali also deems him a "notorious impostor."[114] Many other modern Mulsim writers accept the above label of Musaylima with no reservations.[115] Additionally, Ḥarakāt explains the factor that motivated Musaylima's claim of prophethood, namely Musaylima's opposition to the domination of the people of Quraysh in politics.[116]

Moreover, many modern *Sīra* writers have based their presentation of Musaylima on theological grounds rather than using historical investigation. Narayan, in narrating Musaylima, for example, provides a rather simplified story that "these false prophets (such as Musaylima and Aswad al-Ansī) vanished from the public scene as soon as they had made the claim."[117] Many later writers also accepted previous portrayals of Musaylima provided by classical *Sīra* writers, also with no reservation. Khalīl ʿAbd al-Karīm, for example,

111 Much is still needed to study the image of Muḥammad in modern *sīra* works. Modern Islamicists' attention still focuses on the classical *sīra*. However, Albert Wesselski's article, which pays attention to the re-enactment of *sīra* themes in later literature, e.g. the heroic side of Muḥammad and ʿAlī, is exceptional. See his "Überlieferungen aus der Zeit Mohammads, des Propheten"*AO* 2 (1930): 427-434. Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (London: Viking 1988), which also draws some elements of *sīra*, deserves our serious attention. Interestingly, Rushdie also describes Musaylima as a 'demonic prophet,' who pretended to be John the Baptist (see p. 192, and 360).

112 H. M. Balyuzi, *Muḥammad and the Course of Islam* (Oxford: George Ronald, 176) 136.

113 Maulana Muḥammad Ali, *Muḥammad, The Prophet* (Lahore: Aḥmadiyya Anjuman-i-Isha'at-i-Islam, 1924) 14.

114 Ali, *Muḥammad* 224.

115 See Majid Ali Khan, *Muḥammad the Final Messenger* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1980) 319; ʿAlī Ḥusnī al-Kharbūṭlī, *al-Rasūl fī-l-madīna* ([Cairo]: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā li Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 1973) 260; *Tārīkh Sūriyya* (n.p.: n.d.) vol 5, 6; Fuad Hashem, *Sirah Muḥammad Rasulullah, Suatu Penafsiran Baru* (Bandung: Mizan, 1989) 231; Ibrāhīm Ḥarakāt, *al-Siyāsa wa-l-mujtamaʿ fī aṣr al-rāshidīn* (Beirut: al-Ahliyya li-l-Nashr wa Tawzīʿ, 1985) 29.

116 Ibrāhīm Ḥarakāt, *al-Siyāsa* 29.

117 B. K. Narayan, *Mohammed The Prophet of Islam, A Flame in the Desert* (New Delhi: Lacers Publishers, 1978) 133.

perceives that Musaylima allowed wine drinking and adultery (*aḥalla lahum khamr wa-l-zinā*).[118]

Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, a prominent modern *Sīra* writer, states that a "false pride took possession of him [Musaylima] and he claimed to be himself a prophet." However, his own people, according to Haykal, ridiculed Musaylima during his preaching.[119] Salahi relates that "he [Musaylima] used to repeat a few rhyming phrases which were indeed laughable."[120] In addition to Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Wakīl's designation of slanderer (*fitna*) to Musaylima, Wakīl contrasts the evil deeds committed by Musaylima with the virtuous ones performed by Abū Bakr, who also defeated this 'false' prophet.[121]

In highlighting the diplomatic relation between Medina and Yamāma, Afzal Iqbal notes the Prophet's generosity in giving immunity to the emissaries sent by Musaylima, regardless of the emissaries' rudeness.[122] Muḥammad Baqir, a Shiʿite writer, likewise, stresses the difference between Muḥammad and Musaylima, comparing it to the difference between "heaven and earth or clouds and dust." Muḥammad provides proofs of God, while Musaylima always failed to do so. For example, Muḥammad cured sick and blind men, whereas Musaylima's intervention made sick men worse.[123]

Western writers, on the other hand, offer another perspective in reading the story of Musaylima, which the below section will deal with.

Another Perspective

Considering the fact that Western scholars may be regarded as outsiders in the process of the production and reproduction of the image of Musaylima, one may wonder whether they have treated the subject more fairly than have Muslim writers.

Early Western writers, however, could not escape from another problematic relation, the polemics between the Christians, Jews, and Muslims. In light of this, they were also involved in claiming their own truth and in accus-

118 *Dawla yathrib, Baṣāʾir fi ʿām al-wufūd wa fī akhbārih* (Beirut: Sīnā li Nashr, 1999) 155. See also Ibrāhīm Ḥarakāt, *al-Siyāsa* 23-24; S. Moinul Haq, *Muḥammad Life and Times* (A Historical Interpretation), ed. Ansar Zahid Khan (Karachi: Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, 1997) 504; M. A. Salahi, *Muḥammad: Man and Prophet* (Brisbane: Element, 1995) 688; Muḥammad Riḍā, *Muḥammad Rasūl* 407.

119 Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *The Life of Muḥammad*, trans. Ismail Ragi A. al-Faruqi (Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1397/1976) 472-3.

120 Salahi, *Muḥammad* 688.

121 *Jawla tārīkhiyya fi ʿAṣri al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidīn, Dirāsa waṣfiyya taḥlīliyya al-aḥdāth tilk al-fatra* (Jidda: Dār al-Mujtamaʿ, 1406/1989) 45-48.

122 Afzal Iqbal, *Diplomacy in Islam. An Essay on the Art of Negotiations as Concieved and Developed by The Prophet of Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1962) 65.

123 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Hiyat al-qulub/The Life and Religion of Muḥammad*, trans. James L. Merrick (San Antonio: Zahara Trust, 1982) 309-10.

ing their counterparts of being associated with 'falseness' and 'deceit.' This can be seen in the early Western literature which contains many accusations against Muḥammad, such as 'lying' and being a 'false prophet.'[124] Unsurprisingly, many medieval polemics and apologists saw that the case of Musaylima might have served as a weak point in the history of the early formation of Islam. Certain prejudiced speculations, such as Muḥammad consulting certain teachers who must have helped him compose his revelation, were readily accepted. Musaylima—especially with regard to the word *raḥmān* attributed to him—has been suspected to be one of Muḥammad's informants or teachers.[125] However, in order to understand this better, we will present the dynamic development of the later Western scholarship, rather than accept this simplification.

To begin with, Goldziher barely mentions Musaylima in the context of the night journey of the Prophet, who received a command from God to pray. Regarding Musaylima's position as an anti-prophet, Goldziher mentions Musaylima's promise to reduce the number of prayers.[126] However, the scholar does not comment any further.

In early twentieth century-Western scholarship, however, we still find those who perpetuate the medieval polemical attitude against the Muslims, which influences how they treat Musaylima vis-à-vis Muḥammad. D. S. Margoliouth, for example, takes a position radically opposed to that of early Muslim scholars. He undermines the prophethood of Muḥammad and overestimates that of Musaylima. Viewing Muḥammad less positively elsewhere, he reverses what the Muslims sources have said, suspecting that Muḥammad was a mere pupil of Musaylima. The possible relationship between both prophets, according to Margoliouth, can be seen in the fact that the corn produced from the soil of Yamāma supplied the needs of Meccans. However, the pupil was more successful than the teacher, Margoliouth goes further, in that "Mohammed had far more to teach Maslama than to learn from him. Maslama's aspirations scarcely rose above those of a conjurer; his pupil, far less able to mystify, saw how a Prophet could become the head of a state."[127] Margoliouth, who is quite consistent in asserting his assumption, comments on another occasion,

[124] Many have studied the image of Muḥammad and Islam in the late antiquity, classical, and early modern Western literature; see, for instance, Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The Heresy of the Ishmaelites* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); *John of Damascus De Haeresibus. 101 in Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (Trans. F. H. Chase, Jr.; FC; Washington: Catholic University Press, 1981); Minou Reeves, *Muḥammad in Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Clinton Bennet, *In Search of Muḥammad* (London: Cassel, 1998); Harmut Bobzin, *Mohammed* (München: C. H. Beck, 2002), see, particularly, chapter one.

[125] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image* (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 1980) 84, and 343, n. 20.

[126] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. C. R. Berber and S. M. Stern (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967) 42.

[127] D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (London: G.P. Putnams's Son, 1906) 81.

concerning the correspondence between the two prophets, that "[t]he man whose example Mohammed is thought to have followed when he first began to prophesy, the forgotten Maslama of Yemamah, hopes that his disciple would be satisfied with half of the world, and asked, perhaps on the ground of his seniority, for the right to dispose of the other half; but in vain."[128]

In line with Margoliouth, Emile Dermenghem, who is also often critical of Muslim sources, rejects Musaylima's title of arch-liar provided by Muslim literature. To Dermenghem, Musaylima was not a 'false prophet,' but "another prophet."[129] In countering the Muslim perspective, Maxime Rodinson suspects that it "has set out to ridicule" Musaylima. Firstly, it does this by "attributing his success to conjuring tricks" and secondly by "putting the date of his emergence as a prophet very late." Therefore, the real story, according to Rodinson, ought to contradict the given picture. For Rodinson, Maslama [Musaylima] taught in the name of Raḥmān (the merciful), which connected to the God of Jews and the Father in the Christian Trinity in South Arabia. Musaylima, Rodinson believes, was "another prophet who was also preaching in Arabia at this time, with ideas similar to those of Muḥammad."[130] Some similarities between the two prophets, Rodinson argues, can be found in the following aspects: 1) their proclamation of the prophethood, (Musaylima may have done so even before Muḥammad did; 2) reciting divine revelation in rhymed prose, a style of the early Qur'ānic revelation; 3) having systems of prayers; 4) having been influenced by Christianity in certain ascetic tendencies; 5) forbidding wine and prescribing a form of birth control; and 6) having a significant number of followers.[131]

The key word *al-raḥmān* that appears in the cases of both Musaylima and Muḥammad also attracts F. E. Peters' attention. Drawn from the reports of Ṭabarī and Ibn Isḥāq, Peters comes to understand Musaylima as a 'prophetic rival' of Muḥammad. Peters states, however, that the picture of the teachings of Musaylima offered by Muslim literature is rather 'tendentious'. According to Peters, the teachings and ethics brought by Musaylima—such as fasting every other day, praying three times a day, forbidding wine drinking, and confining sexual intercourse to marriage—were similar to those of Muḥammad. However, the extent of the connection and influences between both prophets remains unclear. Peters then questions the accounts that many early Muslims have provided in maintaining that Musaylima merely borrowed some elements from Muḥammad. As for the word *al-raḥmān*, Peters concludes "that

[128] Margoliouth, *Mohammed* 454.

[129] Emile Dermenghem, *The life of Mahomet* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1930) 228, 334, 335. See also John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muḥammad* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970) 353.

[130] Maxime Rodinson, *Mohammed* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971) 67, 119.

[131] Rodinson, *Mohammed* 272.

al-*raḥmān* had a genuine and long-standing cult in al-Yamama, in the vicinity of modern Riyadh, a cult to which Muḥammad too may have been drawn."[132]

Another Western scholar, Kennedy, subscribes to the same view that Musaylima was a "local prophet" of Yamāma[133] whose orientation was also local.[134] The prophethood that both Musaylima and Muḥammad claimed, according to Kennedy, is rather similar. Moreover, the only difference between Muḥammad's prophethood and those of others, including that of Musaylima, was in the uncompromising universality of Islam. As the Prophet was politically powerful, others failed to compete and survive.[135]

Kennedy also addresses the leadership skills of the Prophet in establishing the *umma*. To him, the leadership of the Prophet was justified by both secular and religious claims, a legitimacy that played a vital role in bringing about the successful mission of the Prophet in founding the *umma*. In this regard, the affinity of politics and religion in early nascent Islam can be shown. Yamāma, on the other hand, stood only as a political ally to Medina. Yet in terms of religion, the town—whose people never "paid taxes or acknowledged the religious nature of Muḥammad's office"—was independent. Unsurprisingly, after Muḥammad's death they raised themselves against Medina led by "their own prophet,"[136] a movement that resembles those in other regions and that served to defend both their prophets and their political independence.[137]

Hans Küng agrees with the above Western scholars in saying that "[e]s war in dieser Region [ostarabische Golfküste], in der ein Prophet namens Maslama oder Musailima aufrat, der in Konkurrenz mit dem Prophethen Muḥammad ebenfalls den einen Gott, „den Erbarmer", verkündete." Moreover, Küng highlights the influence of Christianity in the region, "[v]on den Küsten aus sickerte das Christentum ins Landesinnere."[138]

Another writer, Rogerson, highlights the story of Musaylima's proposal to Muḥammad, which deals with the division of land—the eastern and western parts of Arabia. To Rogerson, Musaylima's movement cannot be seen as a rebellion against Medina, as there was no evidence of any submission of Yamāma to the city-state of Medina prior to the Battle of Yamāma. He, however, subscribes to the view that "they alone had a political structure, a self-confidence, and in Musaylima a source of religious and political authority."

[132] F. E. Peters, *Muḥammad and the Origins of Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994) 156-159.

[133] Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986) 44.

[134] Kennedy, *The Prophet* 55.

[135] Kennedy, *The Prophet* 47.

[136] Kennedy, *The Prophet* 53.

[137] Kennedy, *The Prophet* 55.

[138] Hans Küng, *Der Islam: Geshichte, Gegenwart, Zukunft* (München: Piper, 2004) 66-67.

Against this backdrop, Musaylima can be perceived as a rival of Muḥammad in prophethood.[139]

In what follows, however, some Western scholars have adopted less radical attitudes towards Muslims sources concerning the story of Musaylima. To begin with, Tor Andrae pays attention to the particular relationship between the word *ḥanīf* and the emergence of Arabian prophethood, as was claimed by both Muḥammad and Musaylima. The word, Andrae says, derived from the Syriac word '*hanpe*,' which originally referred to 'heathen,' such as in the use of Manicheans and Sabeans who were called *hanpe*. In Arab tradition, however, the word later developed with a new connotation, namely monotheism. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, explains that the word refers to neither Jews nor Christians. In this vein, the link of the *ḥanīf* and the Manicheans was not direct; as a new inspired movement, *ḥanīf* surpassed its original connotation. In the words of Andrae, "[t]he old Gnostic doctrine of revelation appears to have operated in Arabia," a doctrine to which Musaylima thus belonged, as did Muḥammad. Andrae does not completely reject what the Muslim sources have said of Musaylima, but skeptically wonders "...whether he had not already appeared while Mohammed was still only an unknown quantity in Mecca."[140]

Wellhausen, who is also critical of the Muslim sources, does not reject, however, all of their claims. For example, he concludes that: "Muhammad war sein [Musaylima] Vorbild; er versuchte ihm auch seine Segnungen und Heilwunder nachzumachen, jedoch mit schlechtestem Erfolge,..." Regarding the word *raḥmān*, Wellhausen surprisingly comments: "Indessen geht daraus keine wirkliche Abhängigkeit vom Islam hervor; der Name Rahman und die Form des Gottesdientes waren kein Erfindungen Muhammads,..." On the other hand, Wellhausen does not take the sexual relation of Musaylima and Sajāḥ for granted, an image that, according to him, resulted from the antagonistic attitude of the sources to Musaylima. In the end, Wellhausen is realistic enough to admit that "Schade, dass wir nicht genauer über Sagah und Musailima unterrichtet sind." Inferring from early Muslim sources, Wellhausen draws a certain correlation between the prophethood of Muhammad, Musaylima, and Sajāḥ, by saying that "Kriegerisch war die Religion sowohl bei Muhammad als bei Sagah und Musailima geworden durch ihre enge Verbindung mit dem arabischen Volkstum. Dadurch war die Form der Theokratie von selbst gegeben, wie einst bei den Hebräern."[141]

Not all Western authors contradict early Muslim sources. Muir, for example, seems to accept the perspective of the early Muslim sources, such as those

[139] Barnaby Rogerson, *The Heir of The Prophet Muḥammad* (London: Little Brown, 2006) 148.

[140] Tor Andrae, *Mohammed, the Man and his Faith*, trans. Theopil Menzel (New York: Harper and Row, 1955) 110. Andrae, however, is mistaken in writing that Musaylima came originally from Yemen.

[141] J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985) 19.

of Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Saʿd, and al-Ṭabarī. This, however, leads to Muir's silence about many accounts of Musaylima, e.g. the deputation story,[142] Musaylima's letter, and the two emissaries sent by him to Muḥammad, accounts that Muir accepts without reservations.[143] The following is Muir's portrayal of Musaylima: "He was a man of small stature, in presence insignificant, but ready and powerful in speech." Equally interesting is that Muir seems to accept the label of Musaylima as the impostor who imitated Muḥammad in producing rhymes similar to the verses of the Qurʾān and in working miracles. Thus, to Muir, Musaylima "deceived" the people of Yamāma "by alleging that the claim had been admitted" by Muḥammad. In short, Muir takes the classical Muslim sources at face value, a factor which leads him to view Musaylima as a mere 'false prophet.'[144]

To conclude, although the vast majority of early and later Western scholars are critical of Muslim sources and attempted to magnify the role of Musaylima's prophethood (opposed to the Muslims who try to undermine it), a few of them do accept the information about Musaylima that comes from Muslim sources. More recently, a few scholars—Eickelman, Kister, and Abdullah al-Askar whose insights we have presented elsewhere in this study—have made efforts to treat the story of Musaylima independently of the biographies of Muḥammad.

Self-Criticism

As was indicated, there has been little significant change or review of the status of Musaylima in both classical and modern Muslim literature. However, as pointed out earlier, a few writers—al-Tamīmī, Ibn Abī Ḥadīd, al-Suhaylī, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzī, and Ibn al-Athīr—have at least reduced the 'excessive' accusations against and 'curses' of Musaylima. In line with this, a modern writer, Muḥammad Khuḍarī has taken a more moderate view of Musaylima's guilt. Faruqi and Shaban can also be said to adopt the same stance. Abdullah al-Askar, with no hesitation, takes a critical attitude towards both his own intellectual tradition—that of Muslims—and the West. However, compared to the vast number of those who have always asserted the validity of their accusations against Musaylima, the critical attitude of the abovementioned scholars has so far gained little influence.

To begin with, it seems to Khuḍarī that labelling Musaylima as the arch-liar is not necessary, a position that can be seen in the way in which Khuḍarī's

142 Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mohammad, from Original Sources*, ed. T. H. Weir (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912) 458.

143 Muir, *The Life* 477-478.

144 Muir, *The Life* xx and lxxxi.

simple heading reads: "*khabar Musaylima*/report about Musaylima."[145] His other heading also reads: "Tribe Ḥanīfa and Musaylima."[146] In narrating Musaylima, Khuḍarī paraphrases most of the stories and arranges them in a rather systematic narrative. Although Khuḍarī presents his views on Musaylima more dispassionately, he still regards him to be a mere apostate of Islam for his refusal to pay alms-tax (*zakat*) to Medina,[147] a point of view that leads Khuḍarī to deny the independent prophethood of Musaylima.

Faruqi, similarly, avoids increasing any blame on Musaylima. In his portrayal of the Battle of Yamāma, Faruqi highlights a unique part of the story, where a follower of Musaylima warned another man called Ṭalḥa al-Numayrī, by saying: "Nay, you should say the Messenger of God." Ṭalḥa then responded: "I testify that you [Musaylima] are an impostor and that Muḥammad is truthful, but the impostor of the tribe of Rabīʿa is dearer to us than the truthful one of the tribe Muḍār."[148] Furthermore, Faruqi includes the label of the arch-liar to Musaylima, if only because the sources said so, for example when he mentions the work of al-Kalbī entitled *Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb wa Sajāḥ*.[149]

Muhammad A. Shaban, interestingly, still includes Musaylima's label the 'false prophet.' Certainly, Shaban does not take it literally. Musaylima, for Shaban, only aimed "to establish a common-wealth in Yamāma." It was the economic factor, Shaban says, that motivated Musaylima's movement, a factor that can be seen in the central role of the agricultural productivity of Yamāma, which also played a vital role in the economy of the surrounding region. To illustrate the relation between Mecca and Yamāma, the goods of the region came to Mecca under Muḥammad's control. Thus, the emergence of Musaylima's movement was based on conflicting economical interests between Ḥijāz and Yamāma. However, Musaylima failed to achieve his goals. This, Shaban remarks, was due to Musaylima's focus on controlling only the settled people of central Arabia. Musaylima, unfortunately, underestimated the potential power of the Bedouins, who unwillingly joined him. In addition, the lack of coordination between many movements—such as that of the Asad tribe —might also have contributed to their failure to rebel against Medina.

[145] Muḥammad Khuḍarī, *Itmām al-wafāʾ fī sīra al-khulafāʾ* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Thaqāfiyya, 1402/1982) 28.

[146] Muḥammad Khuḍarī, *al-Dawla al-umawiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Ḥadīth, 1989) 211.

[147] Khuḍarī, *Itmām* 21.

[148] Nisar Ahmed Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography, A Study of Early Transmitters of Arab History from the Rise of Islam up to the End of Umayyad Period (61-750 AD)* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1979) 64.

[149] Faruqi, *Early Muslim* 75. It seems that Faruqi mentions Musaylima's label 'the impostor prophet' only to provide an English translation of *al-kadhdhāb*, which appears in Faruqi's sources. See Faruqi, *Early Muslim* 189.

In fact, each tribe led by its own prophet was independent from other movements.[150]

Jawād ʿAlī gives us some valuable insights into the story of Musaylima in his *al-Mufaṣṣal fi al-tārīkh qabl al-islām*, in which ʿAlī draws on various sources to discover the figure of Musaylima. ʿAlī, however, often displays a critical attitude towards these sources. For instance, he says that the 150 year life span attributed to Musaylima by early Muslim sources is a mere myth. On this, ʿAlī speculates that later authors put hundred before fifty. In fact, Musaylima was perhaps only fifty year old.[151] ʿAlī, moreover, also casts doubt on the negative teachings of Musaylima as portrayed by Muslim sources, such as his allowance of fornication and the drinking of wine.[152] In fact, Musaylima in Yamāma, ʿAlī goes on to say, may have been able to write, as indicated by Musaylima's correspondence with Muḥammad. It is likely, according to ʿAlī, the writing tradition of Judaism and Christianity had a certain influence on Yamāma.[153] Interestingly enough, ʿAlī also questions the term 'the apostasy of Yamāma', which is not supported by any convincing evidence suggesting that they had ever embraced Islam before the battle of Yamāma (for more detailed discussion see chapter elven below). In fact, these people, according to ʿAlī, followed their own prophet and cult, worshipping their own God, called *al-raḥmān*.[154]

Al-Askar, nevertheless, is so far the only Muslim scholar who has treated the story of Musaylima seriously in an English work. On the one hand, he defends the previous Muslims' position and rejects the Western scholars' speculations about Musaylima, regarding his religious connection to Muḥammad. In doing so, al-Askar argues against the assumption that Musaylima was a Christian. In fact, Musaylima, for al-Askar, was rather "an idolator who embraced Islam but later became an apostate."[155] Additionally, he rejects any possible religious connection between Muḥammad and Musaylima with regard to the key word *al-raḥmān*, which might connect the missions of the two prophets.

On the other hand, al-Askar acknowledges the greater role of Musaylima, with regard to the word *al-raḥmān*, attributed to Musaylima and used by Muḥammad since the early period of Mecca.[156] However, the direct confrontation between the two Prophets, al-Askar contends, did not occur, as

[150] M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132), A New Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 20.

[151] Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm al-Malāyīn, 1970) vol. 6, 88.

[152] Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* vol. 6, 90: "*Falā yūjad dalīl ʿalā taḥlīlih al-zinā wa-l-khamr.*"

[153] Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* vol. 6, 97.

[154] Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* vol. 6, 97, 457.

[155] Abdullah al-Askar, *al-Yamama, in the Early Islamic Era* (Reading: Ithaca, 2002) 79.

[156] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 84.

the Prophet hoped to preserve the important economic relationship between Mecca and Yamāma. The main opponents of the Prophet could still have been the Meccans, while Musaylima might have rather been perceived as a small danger whose place, Yamāma, was far away from Mecca. However, in the Medinan period Muḥammad began to perceive Musaylima as a more serious threat.[157]

Moreover, al-Askar shows criticism towards the picture provided by early Muslim literature. To him, it seems impossible that within only a two year period Musaylima was able to organize 40,000 men in the Battle of Yamāma against Khālid's force.[158] Thus, Musaylima must have devoted a longer time in his religious and political activities than what the Muslim sources have so far indicated.

Al-Askar also writes: "the Arab historians have accepted the hostile accounts of Musaylima without question,.....it is difficult to judge Musaylima and his mission only through the writing of his opponents."[159] Al-Askar also notes the two contrasting pictures of Musaylima found in Muslim literature. On the one hand, Musaylima was depicted as a strong leader who attracted a considerable number of followers. On the other hand, many point out his 'flaws,' such as having a flat nose.[160]

However, al-Askar still undermines Musaylima's religious mission in writing that "Musaylima was not really serious about founding a new religion but rather was interested in establishing his position politically. He merely used a religious mission as a background for his real ambition..."[161] Musaylima, according to al-Askar, wanted to establish Yamāma as "independent of Medina, Persian and al-Hira."[162] In undermining Musaylima's prophethood, Askar states: "[t]he false prophets, including Musaylima, probably admired Muḥammad and the way he was building a state. They considered him as a tribal prophet and so they simply followed suit and declared their own prophecies."[163]

All in all, Jawād ʿAlī and al-Askar have set examples as scholars who sought out the truth behind the sayings of the Prophet (as quoted in the above epigraph), namely in that they were critical of their own tradition, an attitude that is quite rare in modern *sīra* scholarship. In keeping with the above spirit, in the following section we will deal with the 'thirty liars' mentioned in the sayings attributed to the Prophet by situating their stories in context.

[157] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 84.

[158] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 88

[159] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 91.

[160] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 92.

[161] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 89.

[162] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 90

[163] Al-Askar, *al-Yamama* 97.

The Liars After Musaylima

After the failure of the above claimants (Musaylima, Umayya, Abū ʿĀmir, Aswad, Ṭulayḥa, and Sajāḥ, who all earned the label of liars), the idea of prophethood did not die out in the Muslim communities.[164] The sayings attributed to the Prophet lends weight to this assumption. According to that tradition, thirty liars would emerge before the end of the world. Both al-Bukhārī and Muslim are cited as authorities in such a tradition.[165] Interestingly, the name of a much later figure, i.e. al-Mukhtār, appears in the tradition. One may therefore venture to propose at least two probabilities: either that al-Mukhtār was simply inserted in the older tradition at a much later time or that the tradition itself was invented very late. In either case, the mention of the tribes Umayya, Ḥanīfa, and Thāqif in the same tradition also mirrors an internal conflict within later Muslim communities, i.e. between the factions of the Marwānids and the Zubayrids. This can be seen in the role of ʿAbdalla b. Zubayr in transmitting the report.

To infer from the above story, the term *al-kadhdhāb* seems to have gained its validity on many occasions, some of which the above tradition mentions. Another tradition also mentions the claim of prophethood by al-Mukhtār that Jibrīl came to him with revelation. [166] Due to the impossibility of the Prophet's vivid recognition of al-Mukhtār, the above tradition is likely a later invention, which was perhaps triggered by political rivalries in the later Muslim community.

Moreover, in one of the traditions the term *al-kadhdhāb* is also paired with the word *mubīr*/destroyer, which also refers to al-Ḥajjāj, a prominent governor of ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Marwān and al-Wālid b. ʿAbd al-Mālik. Interestingly, ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb, who foretold the birth of al-Ḥajjāj as a *mubīr*, warned the people of Iraq about the danger that this *mubīr* would bring. He said that this *mubīr* would apply jāhiliyya law.[167] Another ʿUmar, that is ʿUmar II (b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz), is also reported to have cursed al-Ḥajjāj.[168] Given this fact, it is likely that certain narrators of the above reports were confused by the two ʿUmars.

Turning to al-Mukhtār *al-kadhdhāb*, the leader of a rebellious movement against the Marwānids and Zubayrids, *tārīkh* literature portrayed him nega-

[164] Comparsion can be made between the concept of *khātam* and the end of prophethood found in Judaism. It was assumed that after the first temple period The Prophethood in Judaism ended. However, recent findings—particularly with regard to the dead-sea scrolls—suggest that some claimants can still be found in the second temple period, e.g. Ben Sira and Josephus. See, for instance, Micheal H. Floyd, "Introduction" in M. H. Floyd and R. D. Haak, eds. *Prophets, Prophecy* 5.

[165] Ibn Kathīr, *Shamāʾil al-rasūl wa dalāʾil nubuwwatih wa faḍāʾilih wa khaṣāʾiṣih*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Wāḥid (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1387/1967) 457.

[166] Ibn Kathīr, *Shamāʾil* 458.

[167] Ibn Kathīr, *Shamāʾil* 459.

[168] Ibn Kathīr, *Shamāʾil* 461.

tively. Al-Dīnawarī and al-Ṭabarī, for instance, note al-Mukhtār's opportunism in politics.[169] Certainly, al-Mukhtār rejects his 'label' of liar. In this regard, he said: "I have been told that you call me a liar. The prophets were called liars before me, and I am no better than many of them."[170] Here, al-Mukhtār draws certain similarities between his position and those of the prophets. As was the fate of the previous 'claimants' and the 'liars,' al-Mukhtār was defeated and then killed.[171]

After al-Mukhtār, a number of figures in early Muslim communities around the Arabian peninsula still claimed prophethood—al-Ḥārith b. Sa'īd *al-kadhdhāb* (d. 79 AH/698-96), [172] an unknown man during Abū Ḥanīfa's lifetime (80 AH/699 AD-150 AH/767 AD), [173] Muḥammad b. Sa'īd *al-maslūb* (the crucified),[174] al-Muqanna (159-63/775-80),[175] Maḥmūd b. al-Faraj al-Nīsābūrī (d. Dhū al-Ḥijja 3, 235/June 18, 850), [176] and 'Alī b. Muḥammad[177]—whose stories *tārīkh* and *adab* literature still preserves.

All of the stories of the above claimants always involved the role of caliphs, whose authority these claimants challenged and who, in turn, silenced them.

[169] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 107; al-Dīnawarī (d. 282), *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo: Dār iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabīyya, 1950) 307.

[170] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 68-9.

[171] See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 6, 111.

[172] Al-Ḥārith, who declared his claim in a mosque of Damascus, attracted a considerable number of followers. Eventually, the caliph's troops captured him, after the claimant escaped to Jerusalem. Similar to al-Mukhtār, al-Ḥārith also earned the label of 'liar.' See Y. Freidmann, "Finality of Prophethood in Sunni Islam" *JSAI* 7 (1986) 194; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islam* vol. 5, 386; Ibn Asākir, *Tārīkh madīna al-dimashq*, ed. 'Alī Shīrī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415/1995) vol. 5, 428; D. M. Dunlop "Al-Ḥārith b. Sa'īd al-Kadhdhāb. A claimant to Prophecy in the Caliphate of 'Abd al-Mālik" *Studies in Islam* (1964) vol. 1, 12-18; J. van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* (Stuttgart: Franzsteir Verlag, 1977) 228-230.

[173] See al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī, *Manāqib abī hanīfa* (Hayderabad, 1321) vol. 1, 161.

[174] See Y. Friedmann, "Finality" 195; al-'Asqālānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 9, 184-6; al-Bukhārī, *Tārīkh al-kabīr* (Hyderabad: Dā'ira al-Ma'ārif 'Uthmāniyya, 1361/1963) vol. 1, part. 1, 94; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl* vol. 7, 262-264; Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzan al-I'tidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajawī (n.p.: Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabīyya, n.d.) vol. 3, 561-3; al-Khātib al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī 'ilm al-riwāya*, ed. Aḥmad 'Umar Hāshim (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1406/1986) 405. See also t al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Madkhal ilā ma'rifat al-iklīl/Introduction of the Science of Tradition*, ed. James Robson (London: Luzac, 1953) 25-26; al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a fi-l-aḥādīth al-mawḍū'a*, ed. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣiddīq (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Ḥusayniyya, n.p.) vol. 1, 264; Subḥī Ṣāliḥ, *'Ulūm al-ḥadīth* 270.

[175] See Y. Friedmann, "Finality" 196; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 8, 144; Kennedy, *The Prophet* 136-7; Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974) vol. 1, 313; G. H. Sadighi, *Mouvements Religieux Iraniens* (Paris, 1938); Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam, A Study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) 205

[176] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 9, 175; *The History*, trans. Joel L. Kreamer 95.

[177] Kennedy, *The Prophet* 180. It is interesting that 'Alī, who attracted a considerable number of followers, began his mission of prophethood in Yamāma, the town of Musaylima. In the year 254/868, he then moved to Baṣra, where he gained more followers from the ranks of slaves by promising to improve their conditions in his revelation.

As was discussed earlier in chapter four, the caliphs guarded the *khātam* (finality of prophethood) which served as the legitimacy for their caliphal office.[178] Thus, anyone who challenged the *khātam* doctrine also challenged the power of the caliphs. No other authority was allowed outside the caliphal office. These claimants, whose followers are often reported to have been numerous, indeed posed dangerous threats.

It is worth recalling that the tradition attributed to the Prophet warning about the emergence of the 'thirty liars' here serves as a model of and for 'reality.' The threat that these liars—claimants and rebels—brought to the incumbent rulers was as dangerous as that of Musaylima to Abū Bakr. The story of Musaylima's danger, in this regard, serves as a model for later caliphs who faced other claimants and rebels. Thus, the caliphs had to defend their authority, i.e. by warning the people about the danger that these liars brought. Thus, the many stories of false prophets in early Muslim literature were put to use. As regards the perpetuation of the stories, Muslim literature played a central role in recording the contemporary stories of the claimants and, at the same time, recalling those of the previous 'false' prophets. In this vein, many different stories were compared to one another or were jumbled together, regardless of the differring contexts of these stories. Additionally, the fact that many still claimed prophethood at the time inspired the narrators to put the stories of these claimants in their works. In addition, the validity of the danger of the 'thirty liars' has also been renewed in many contexts.

As Unconscious as a Dream

Why did later Muslim writers—who lived after the ages of the caliphate—still assert the danger of Musaylima?

It is important to note that the narrators of the story of Musaylima, namely the ʿulamāʾ (Muslim scholars), regarded themselves as the heirs of prophethood. A known tradition reads: *'al-ʿulamāʾ warath al-anbiyāʾ* (the ʿulamāʾ are the heirs of the prophets). In this vein, the ʿulamāʾ also performed the task of guardianship of the sole prophethood (*khātam*), which is similar to that of the previous caliphs. However, the way in which they perform the task is different: the one employs political means, whereas the other uses dogmatic claims.

It is equally important to view the later 'production' and 'reproduction' of the negative images of Musaylima as a process of mythologizing, which can be explained in the following way.

[178] For more anecdotal stories which tell about the debates between claimants to prophethood and caliphs (al-Rāshid, al-Maʾmūn, al-Muʿtaṣim, al-Mutawakkil, and Khālid b. ʿAbdalla al-Qasrī), see al-Muḥallī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalibī wa ʿAwlāduh, 1952) vol. 2, 271-273.

To begin with, some have suggested that an analogy can be made between dreaming and myth making in the following respects. Both involve certain elements of subconsciousness.[179] Those who dream and those who are involved in the process of myth making are involved in subconscious activity, a stage somewhere between reality and fantasy.[180] It is certain that Musaylima was not a purely mythical figure invented from thin air. Indeed, he once existed as a historical person, no matter how different he was from the depiction provided by later Muslim sources. Yet in the later development the narrators of Musaylima unconsciously cursed and blamed the subject without reservation. Blaming or cursing Musaylima involves subconscious acts, which occur in a stage between 'reality' and 'fantasy.' The further removed the narrators were from Musaylima's time and place, the more fantasy was involved in blaming him.

Surprisingly enough, the 'literal dream' can also be found in the designation of Musaylima as the arch-liar. That is, a tradition about the Prophet's dream explicitly mentions the accusation of Musaylima being an arch-liar. That said, the Prophet dreamed about two bracelets made of gold: one bracelet refers to the danger of al-Ansī, whereas the other refers to that of Musaylima 'the arch-liar.' One may wonder whether that dream belonged to the Prophet or to the narrators of Musaylima, who were involved in mythologizing this figure. Additionally, re-telling of the Prophet's dream by later narrators also involves another type of 'fantasy,' in which they can be said to be mythologizing.

The story of Musaylima is still vividly present in the imagination of its narrators. To illustrate, although Musaylima and his followers had perished long ago, many later narrators still see Musaylima as a threat to them, a hallucination that leads them to further "imagine" of the danger that the fossilized Musaylima may bring. Not only do these narrators preserve the accusations made against Musaylima, but they also renew the validity of these accusations, an indication of another process of mythologizing.

Having considered the label of Musaylima the arch-liar as a mythical element, we can also indicate another function of this myth, namely that of a 'defence mechanism.'[181] To illustrate, in the periods of the four rightly guided, the Umayyad, and the Abbasid caliphs, the accusations made against Musaylima served to defend both the theological and political legitimacy of the caliphal office. For later writers, however, the defence mechanism remains only in the theological realm, an indication that this myth is still operative.

[179] See Dan Merkur, *Psychoanalytic Approaches to Myth, Freud and the Freudians* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 39.

[180] Merkur, *Psychoanalytic* 45, 101.

[181] Merkur, *Psychoanalytic* 58.

The story of Musaylima confirms another function of myth, namely 'symbolic meaning.'[182] In later Qur'ānic exegesis (with regard to the interpretation of Q. 6: 92), the historical Musaylima has somehow been denied. Additionally, later exegetes understand that Musaylima serves only as a mere symbol of anyone who acts against God and challenges His messenger, regardless of the time and place the challenger may occupy.

[182] Merkur, *Psychoanalytic* 107 and 120.

CHAPTER NINE

VOICES

Remember that from the grave,
my voice will be louder than from above the earth.
(Tan Malaka)[1]

...and if I knew that the dead could not speak,
I was nonetheless certain that I could re-create a conversation
with them. Even when I came to understand that in my most
intense moments of straining to listen all I could hear was my own
voice, even then I did not abandon my desire.
(Steven Greenblatt)[2]

In this chapter, I argue that Musaylima claimed prophethood by revealing his own 'qur'ān' (reading),[3] which is substantially similar to to the Qur'ān revealed by the Prophet Muhammad—in terms of style, diction, and content. Thirty-three stanzas attributed to Musaylima preseerved in many genres of Muslim literature are grouped according to the following themes: four stanzas on *Creation*, four stanzas on *Oaths*, five stanzas on *Tribalism*, twelve stanzas

[1] Tan Malaka, *Dari Pendjara ke Pendjara* (1948); *From Jail to Jail* (1991); as also quoted by C. W. Watson, *Of Self and Nation: Autobiography and the Representation of Modern Indonesia* (Honolulu: Hawaii Press, 2000) 79.

[2] S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiation: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 1; as also quoted by Jürgen Pieters, *Speaking with the Dead: Explorations in Literature and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) 18.

[3] On the early meaning of 'qur'an' as a general 'reading,' which later developed into "the Qur'an" as a Scripture, see n. 47 below.

on *Animals*, one stanza on *Women*, seven stanzas on *Teachings*, and two stanzas on *Battle*. Many of these appear to be mere variations of the same stanzas, with variations presented by different Muslim narrators. For the sake of clarity, I treat each of these stanzas separately, except when they include only minor variants.

I analyze these stanzas in the following sections by looking at their diction, meaning, organizational patterns, and rhyme schemes. Comparison between these stanzas and the verses of the Qurʾān are made, with the assumption that the two kinds of texts originated from more or less the same milieu.

The Concept of Creation

Ibn Hishām and al-Ṭabarī, whose authority is extended back to Ibn Isḥāq, preserved the following three lines of *sajʿ* (rhymed prose) attributed to Musaylima (stanza *Creation* **A**):

Laqad anʿam allāh ʿalā-l-ḥublā	God has been gracious to the pregnant woman
Akhraj minhā nismat tusʿā	He has brought forth from her a living being that can move
Min bayna ṣifāq wa hashā	from between the bowels and peritonium.[4]

Ibn Isḥāq, unfortunately, does not treat the above rhymed prose attributed to Musaylima seriously. That is, he presents the story associated with these verses that seems to have been intended to discredit Musaylima. According to this story, Musaylima composed the above rhymed prose after his visit to Medina as a member of the deputon of the tribe Ḥanīfa meeting the Prophet Muḥammad (see chapter five earlier). Muslim authors, in this regard, believe that Musaylima—who must have been inspired by Muḥammad's revelation—is portrayed as a mere imitator.

[4] Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 577; trans. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 637; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) 3, 137; trans. Ismail K. Poonawala, *The Last Years of The Prophet* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990) 96-97; Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, *ʿUyūn al-athar fī funūn al-maghāzī wa shamāʾil wa siyar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Qudsī, 1356 H.) vol. 2, 236; Al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-hudā wa-l-rashād fi sīra khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Ibrahīm al-Tarzī and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-ʿUzbawī (Cairo: Wizāra Awkāf, Lajna Iḥyā al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1402/1982) vol. 6, 496-497; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *al-Durar fī ikhtiṣār al-maghāzī wa siyar*, ed. Shawqī Ḍayf (Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr, 1386/1966) vol. 11, 270; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 5, 51, vol. 6, 326; Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-maʿād fī hady khayr al-ʿibād*, ed. Muḥammad al-Masʿūdī (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Miṣriyya, 1347/1928) vol. 3, 31; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *al-Maghāzī*, 683; Ghariquriyus Abū al-Farj b. Hārūn al-Ṭabīb al-Malaṭī (Bar Hebraeus), *Tārīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwāl*, ed. Antun Ṣāliḥānī al-Yasūʿī (Beirut: Maktaba al-Kathūlikiyya li-l-Abāʾ al-Yasūʿiyyīn, 1890) 162; Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm al-Malāyīn, 1970) vol. 8, 759.

Whereas the reliablity of the story surrounding the rhymes is questionable, we must not necessarily reject the text of the stanza above as also being worthless. One can perhaps use the following analogy to lend support to this argument. It goes without saying that all Muslims theologically accepted the authenticity of the text of the Qurʾān, held firmly to be unchanged from the time of the Prophet to the present; but it is not the case with the occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), which explain the way in which the verses of the Qurʾān were initially uttered by the Prophet.[5] By the same token, although the story related to the text of Musaylima's verses was likely invented at a later time, the text itself deserves serious attention.

Interestingly, al-Ṭabarī presents another context in which Musaylima uttered the same rhymed prose. It is said that during their meeting, Sajāḥ asked Musaylima to recite some of the divine revelations, one of which—stanza *Creation* **B**—reads:

Alam tarā ilā rabbika kayfa faʿala bi al-ḥublā	Do you not see how your Lord has dealt with the pregnant woman
Akhraja minhā nismat tusʿā,	
Min bayna ṣifāq wa ḥashā. [6]	

The difference between stanza *Creation* A and B can be seen in the first line of two stanzas. Ibn Isḥāq proceeds directly with *laqad anʿam Allāh*, whereas al-Ṭabarī begins with the words *alam tarā ilā rabbika kayfa faʿala* (echoing Q. 105: 1). Al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) presents a slight different version, which reads: *alam tarā kayfa faʿala rabbuka bi-l-ḥublā*,[7] a reading which is closer to Q. 105: 1. Al-Khaṭṭābī, however, reads the last line of the stanza: *bayna sharāsif wa ḥashā*.[8]

Al-Hārūnī presents the same version except that the word *anʿama* is replaced by *mannā* with the more or less same meaning. The verses (of stanza *Creation* **C**), therefore, read:

Alam tara kayfa faʿala rabbuka bi-l-ḥublā
Laqad mannā Allāh ʿala al-ḥublā

[5] See Andrew Rippin, "Occasions of Revelation" in *EQ*. Ref. cited. Some Muslim and Western schoalars cast doubt on the stories of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, which are often seen as apocryphal. However, the authenticity of the text of the Qurʾān is often independent from the story which frames it.

[6] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 273; *The History, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. F. M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 94; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975) vol. 19, 79; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 356; al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān* in *Thalāth rasāʾil fī iʿjāz al-qurʾān li rummānī wa-l-khaṭṭābī wa ʿabd al-qāhir al-jurjānī*, ed. Muḥammad Khalāf Allāh and Muḥammad Zaghlūl Salām (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) 50-1.

[7] See also the same version presented by al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Saqr (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) 240; Muḥammad Ḥasan Hītū, *al-Muʿjiza al-qurʾāniyya, al-Iʿjāz al-ʿilmī wa-l-ghaybī* (Beirut: Muʿassasa al-Risāla, 1409/1989) 61.

[8] Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān* in *Thalāth rasāʾil* 50-51.

Akhraja minhā nismat tasʿā	
Min bayn ṣifāq wa ḥashā	
Aḥalla lahā al-zinā.[9]	God allows her to commit adultery

In view of the last line of the above stanza, it is appears that al-Hārūnī merely seeks to discredit Musaylima, by inserting the explanation by Ibn Isḥāq into the verses of Musaylima.

Unfortunately, we cannot speculate on anything with regard to the attribution of stanzas A, B, and C to Musaylima. It is unclear whether these verses came from the mouth of Musaylima or from his enemies who ascribed them later to him. Al-Ṭabarī, surprisingly, presents a slightly different version, implying that it was perhaps taken from a somewhat different source.[10]

In view of the length of these four stanzas, one can perhaps reach the conclusion that the longer the version, the earlier its origin. These stanzas can therefore be chronologically ordered as follows: Ibn Isḥāq (*Creation* A), al-Ṭabarī and al-Bāqillānī (*Creation* B), and al-Hārūnī (*Creation* C).

A longer version of Musaylima's stanza (*Creation* **D**), however, reads:

Sabbiḥ ism rabbika al-aʿlā	Glorify the name of your Lord most high
Al-ladhī yassara ʿalā-l-ḥublā	Who grants ease to the pregnant woman
Fa akhraja minhā nusmat tusʿā	He has brought forth from her a living being that can move
Min bayna aḥshā wa maʿā	From between the bowels and intestine
Fa minhum man yamūt wa yudassu fi al-thurā	Among them who die and are buried in the ground
Wa minhum man yaʿīsh wa yabqā Ilā ajalin muntahā	And among them who live and continue until the end of appointed time
Wa Allāh yaʿlam al-sirr wa akhfā	And God knows the secret and hidden [thing]
Wa la tukhfā ʿalayh al-ākhira wa-l-ūlā.[11]	And neither the end nor the beginning is concealed to Him.

The composition of stanza D shares some noteworthy points of similarity to the Qurʾān *sūra* 87 (*al-Aʿlā*). The first line appears to be a mere copy of verse Q. 87: 1. Like verse Q. 87: 2, the above stanza deals with the basic concept of creation. The second line of stanza D reveals a feature similar to verse Q. 87: 8, which reads: "*Wanuyassaruka li-l-yusrā* (And we will make it easy for you to follow the simple (path)." The theme of death and life in lines 5 and 6 is rather similar to that in verse Q. 87: 13, which reads: "*thummā la yamūt*

[9] Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt nubuwwāt al-nabī*, ed. Khalīl Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Ḥajj (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1399/1979) 39.

[10] Al-Ṭabarī explains the source as taken from "*ghayr sayf* (other than Sayf)." See, al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 273; trans. Donner, *History* 94.

[11] Jawād Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal* vol. 8, 756; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī-l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa, 1384/1965) 147; Muṭṭahar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʾ wa-l-tārīkh* (Baghdad: al-Muthannā, 1916) vol. 5, 161-162.

fīhā wa lā yaḥyā (In [hell] they will neither die nor live)." Line 7 also echoes the sound of verse Q. 87: 7, which reads: "*Illā mā shā'a Allāh, innah yaʿlam al-jahr wa mā yakhfā* (Except as God wills: for He knows what is manifest and what is hidden)." Finally, the last line of stanza D resonates with the wording of verses Q. 87: 17 and 18, which reads: " *Wa-l-ākhirat khayr wa abqā. Inna hādha lafī suḥuf al-ūlā* (But the Hereafter is better and more enduring. And this is in the Books of the earliest)."

Compared to stanzas A, B and C, stanza D is not only the longest version, but also the one most similar to the Qur'ān. However, stanza D does not resemble these earlier versions. Stanza A shares similar features with Qur'ānic verses noted above: in terms of diction (*anʿama, akhraja,* and *Allāh*), in the use of rhymed scheme *ā-ā-ā*, and in terms of the theme, namely creation (which will be discussed below). Stanza B and C are similar to verse Q. 105: 1 with regard to the words "*alam tara.*" Stanza D, however, is neither a continuation nor a variation of stanza B and C, but an entirely different version, which, indeed, is much more closely related to *sūra* Q. 87.

As a comparison among these stanzas, it seems that the later the version is the one most similar to the Qur'ān. It seems hard to find direct similarity of the stanza A of Ibn Isḥāq to the verses of the Qur'ān, whereas the later version of al-Ṭabarī (B) features a copy of the verse of the Qur'ān (Q. 105: 1). So do the versions of al-Hārūnī, al-Bāqillānī, and al-Khaṭṭābī, and al-Thaʿālābī.

However, stanza D, whose content does not denigrate Musaylima and contains very basic elements of religious teaching, is clearly distinguished from stanzas A, B, and C. Stanza D covers the concepts of creation, birth, life, and death, themes that are obviously the basic concepts of religions.

It is therefore worthwhile to compare the content of Musaylima's stanzas with those of the early Meccan verses of the Qur'ān, all of which take up the doctrine suggesting that God is the Creator, and man is merely His creature—the earliest themes that the Qur'ān,[12] e.g. Q. 96: 1-2—introduced. What Musaylima's stanzas and those in Q. 96: 1-2 share in common is the view that man is created by God, whose name is Allah in Musaylima's verses, whereas in Q. 96: 2 referred to as the Lord (*al-rabb*).[13]

Indeed, stanzas A and B contain an important concept of creation, which deserves our attention. What we will present describes more or less the early concept of revelation of the Qur'ān, which may also have been the original

[12] See, for example, Johan Bouman, *Gott und Mensch im Koran: Eine Strukturform religiöser Anthropologie anhand des Beispiels Allah und Muḥammad* (Darmstad: Wissenschafliche Buchsgesellschaft, 1977) 12.

[13] Note that the term Allah was known in the pre-Islamic period; see, for example, Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964) 93-105. It is not impossible, therefore, to imagine that Musaylima also uses Allah together with *raḥmān*, with both names denoting God.

concept shared by many tribal cults in the rest of Arabia.[14] In this regard, it stands to reason that Musaylima and Muḥammad could have shared this worldview concerning the concept of creation.

A comparison between Musaylima's stanzas and some verses of the Qur'ān revealed in Meccan period—86: 5-7, 82: 6-7, 80: 17-19, 76: 2, 75: 36-38, and 95: 4-5—can therefore be made. Meccan verses Q. 86: 5-7 also contain the basic concept of creation, which is comparable to that contained by stanzas A, B, C and D of Musaylima in terms of the basic concept of creation and the image employed. Stanza A says *min bayna ṣifāq wa hashā*, whereas Q. 86: 7 says *min bayna al-ṣulb wa-l-tarā'if* (between the backbone and ribs). What distinguishes them is their description of the material that God uses to create man. Stanzas *Creation* A, B, C and D asserts that God uses *ḥublā*, whereas Q. 86: 6 asserts that God uses *mā' dāfiq* (a drop of emitted water).

Verses Q. 82: 6-7 also describe the concept of creation, which is linked to the benevolence of God, by which man was created. The verses then question why man forgets his Creator, a call for contemplation which is absent from stanzas A, B, and C. However, stanza D contains such call for contemplation, by recalling the might of God, who knows hidden things and contrasts this with man's mortality. Verses Q. 80: 17-19 contains another concept of creation, which is related to criticism of those who reject God, which is absent in Musaylima's stanzas. Verse Q. 80: 19 also refers to *nuṭfa* (sperm) as a material from which man is created, a notion that makes it different from what the stanzas of Musaylima have conveyed. Verse Q. 76: 2 recalls *nuṭfa*, whose later growth into the form of a human being is also described.

Many verses of the Qur'ān also remind the audience to contemplate after observing certain things. The Qur'ān presents the concept of creation to remind mankind that they may later be returned to the lowest rung of creation (Q. 95: 4-5). However, in the above stanzas Musaylima does not ask his followers to do the same.

Given the fact, one may wonder whether or not Musaylima was serious in claiming his prophethood, as almost no moral lesson is found in the stanzas attributed to him. However, it is worth recalling that Ibn Isḥāq did not treat the remnant verses of Musaylima seriously, too. Nor do later scholars. What is obvious is that these stanzas are only fragments, which were later quoted and presented in various contexts and stories.

Nonetheless, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Musaylima shared the following basic concepts with Islam, or more specifically with the early Meccan revelation of the Qur'ān: the creation, the destiny of man, and the relation of man to God. The following table presents comparsion between the

[14] In this regard, one may disagree with Izutsu, who suggests that the concept of creation played a peripheral role in the *jāhilī's* worldview. See Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man* 122-123. I would argue that there must have been an embryo of the concept in that period, on which the early Meccan revelation of the Qur'ān based.

concepts of creation contained in the stanzas and some early Meccan verses of the Qurʾān:

Fig. 9.1

Texts	**The Names of God**	**Subject**	**Images**	**Vocabularies**
Stanza *Creation* A	*Allah*	*Insān* (human) in all texts	*Ḥublā* (pregnant woman)	*Anʿama* (to grant) *akhraja* (to facilitate)
Stanza *Creation* B	*Al-rabb* (the Lord)		*Ḥublā*	*Faʿala* (to make) *akhraja* (to get it out)
Stanza *Creation* C	*Rabb*		*Ḥublā*	*Faʿala* (to make) *manna* (to grant)
Stanza *Creation* D	*Rabb*		*Ḥublā*	*Yassara* (to grant easiness) *akhraja* (to get it out)
Q. 96: 1-2	*Rabb*		*ʿAlaq* (congealed blood)	*Khalaqa* (to create)
Q. 86: 5-7	Not mentioned, passiv voice (*khuliq*)		*Māʾin dafiq* (a drop of emitted/water)	*Khalaqa* (to create)
Q. 82: 6-7	*Al-rabb al-karīm* (the noble Lord)		Not mentioned	*Khalaqa* (to create) *sawwā* (to fashion in proportion)
Q. 80: 17-19	Personal pronoun *hu* (*Him*)		*Nuṭfa* (sperm)	*Khalaqa* (to create) *qaddara* (to mould in proportion)
Q. 76: 2	Personal pronoun *nā* (We)		*Nuṭfa*	*Jaʿala* (to make)
Q. 75: 36-38	Passive voice, not mentioned		*Nuṭfa* *Manī* (sperm)	*Mannā* (to grant)
Q. 95: 4-6	Personal pronounce *nā* (We)		Not mentioned	*Khalaqa* (to create)

Some words—*rabb, allah, insān, khalaqa, manna, anʿama, akhraja, yassara,* and *faʿala*—appear to be the same in the above texts. However, they use different images to describe when exatly human life begins. The verses of the Qurʾān say that human life begins since in the form of sperm, whereas the stanzas of Musaylima describe the beginning of life in the later stage of pregnancy.

However, in later Muslim literature the stanzas of Musaylima has become an object of ridicule. The basic concept of creation contained in them was then related to the negative portrayals of Musaylima, i.e. his sexual affairs with Sajāḥ. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the following rhymed prose attributed to Musaylima (stanza *Creation* E) was likely fabricated at a much later time:

Inna Allāh khalaqa al-nisāʾ afraja	Verily God creates women as vulvas
Wa jaʿala al-rijāl lahunna azwāja	And makes men for them as husbands

Fa nūliju fī hinna quʿs ʿilāja	So we insert into them fat cocks
Thumma nukhrijuhā idhā nashā' ikhrāja	Then we withdraw them when we wish
Fa yuntajnā lanā sikhāl intāja	So they may produce for us a kid.[15]

It would be too shameful for someone proclaiming prophethood to deliver the above passage as divine revelation. In terms of place, stanza *Creation* E and B are found in the same story and context in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*, a way that several later authors repeated. It is said that Musaylima uttered both stanzas as a prelude to his sexual scandal with Sajāḥ.

In addition, the image of Musaylima became more vilified with time, as attested by this lustful *rajaz* attributed to him (stanza *Creation* F):

Alā qūmī ilā al-nayk	*Faqad huyyi laki al-maḍjaʿ*
Wa in shi'ti fafī-l-bayt	*Wa in shi'ti fafī-l-makhdaʿ*
Wa in shi'ti salqanāk	*Wa in shi'ti ʿalā arbaʿ*
Wa in shi'ti bi thalāthih	*Wa in shi'ti bih ajmaʿ*

Why don't you go to fuck.	As the bed has been prepared for you
If you wish, in the house.	Or, if you wish, in the closet
If you wish we shall take you thrown on your back.	Or, if you wish, on [all] four
If you wish, with two-thirds of it.	Or, if you wish, with all of it.[16]

The above lewd passage is entirely different from the rest of typical Musaylima's stanzas, with the exception of stanza E. Stanza F is clearly not *sajʿ* but rather *rajaz* or even *ʿarūd* (which are themselves evolution of *sajʿ*).[17] Sajāḥ, in response to Musaylima's invitation, is said to have answered "*bal bihi ajmaʿ* (with all of it I combine)." Needless to say, the story appears to be merely apocryphal propaganda.

Repetitive Oaths[18]

Almost a century and half ago, Nöldeke suggested that there could be a parallel between the Meccan revelation of the Qur'ān and Musaylima's utterances. In particular, there are obvious similarities between both in terms of the use of oaths, which many Meccan *sūras* employ roughly 30 times. Moreover, the typical oaths using natural phenomena as objects share certain simi-

[15] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 273; trans. Donner, *History* 94-5; al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-arab* vol. 19, 79; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 356; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qur'ān* 240.

[16] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 273; trans. Donner, *History* 95; al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-Arab* vol. 19, 79; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 356; al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda, riwāya aḥmad b. muḥammad b. aʿtham al-kūfī* (d. 314), ed. Yaḥyā al-Juburī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990/1410) 112.

[17] The evolution model of *sajʿ—rajaz—ʿarūḍ* (*qāsida*) proposed by Prolov is worth considereing here. Thus, *rajaz* is a later development of *sajʿ*, which is the simplest and most primitive form of Arabic rhyme. See Frolov, *Classical Arabic Verse: History and Theory of ʿArūḍ* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 98. See also n. 18 below, and the discussion of stanzas *Battle* A and B.

[18] See G. R. Hawting, "Oaths" in *EQ*; J. Pedersen and Y. Linant de Bellefonds "Kasam," in *EI*².

larities with the common practices of pre-Islamic *kāhins*.[19] Recently, Frolov shed a new light on this in his study of the evolution of *saj*ʿ*-rajaz-shi*ʿ*r*, which helps us compare the early Meccan revelation with the utterances of *kuhhān*, and with those of Musaylima.[20] In addition, the latest reader of Musaylima's verses and speeches prior to this study, Kister, concludes that "Musaylima's verses and speeches bear substantial similarity with the Qurʾān."[21]

The story, which frames stanzas *Oaths* A, *Oaths* B, and *Oaths* C, *Tribalism* A, and *Women* below, goes that the people of Yamāma were fearful of the raids performed by the Usayyids, who destroyed their fruits and defiled the sacred enclave, i.e., the Yamāma's version of the Kaʿba. The complainers then came to Musaylima, who then deliverd (stanza *Oaths* **A**) as follows:

Wa-l-layl al-aṭḥām	By the darkest night
Wa-l-dhaʾb[22] *al-adlam*	By the blackest wolf
*Wa-l-jadha*ʿ[23] *al-azlam*[24]	By the sacrificed meat of divination by arrow[25]
Ma intakahat Usayyid min maḥram.[26]	Usayyid has not defiled a sacred thing.[27]

Musaylima also delivers another selection of rhymed prose (stanza *Oaths* **B**) as follows:

Wa-l-layl al-dāmis	By the obscure night
Wa dhaʾb al-hāmis	By the restless wolf

19 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, ed. F. Schwally (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961) vol. 1, 75-76.

20 In this regard, Frolov provides many examples explaining the idea that early revelation of the Qurʾān often uses *saj*ʿ as found in many utterances of *kuhhān*. See his *Classical Arabic Verse* 119 and elsewhere. See also Irfan Shahid, "Another Contribution to Koranic Exegesis: The Sura of the Poets (XXVI)" in *JAL* 14 (1983) 19-20.

21 Kister, "The Struggle against Musaylima and the conquest of Yamama" *JSAI* 27 (2002) 42.

22 See the use of the word *dhaʾb* in Q. 12: 13, 14, and 17.

23 The word *jadha*ʿ, according to al-Rāghib Ishafahānī, means either a meat of a five years-old camel (*ibil*) or a year-old goat. See his *Mufradāt fī gharīb al-qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid al-Kaylānī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n. d.) 90. The Qurʾān often pairs *jadha*ʿ with *nakhla*., a combination which refers to the leaf of a palm tree. See, for example, Q. 19: 22; 19: 24 and 20: 71.

24 The word *azlam* here stands for an arrow, which the Arabs often used in divination. See Muḥammad Fuʿād ʿAbd al-Bāqi, *Muʿjam gharīb al-qurʾān mustakhrajan min ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī* (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalibī, n.d.) 80. See also the use of the word in Q. 5: 93.

25 Donner, however, translates this phrase as "By the mountain goat."

26 Although the Qurʾān uses various forms of *ḥrm* abundantly, e.g. *shahr al-ḥarām*/sacred month (2: 194) and *al-masjid al-ḥarām*/sacred mosque (2: 196), the exact word *maḥram* is not found.

27 Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 283; trans. Donner, *History*, 108; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān* 238-9; al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt Nubuwwāt* 38. Al-Khaṭṭābī, however, presents another version of the last line which runs: *Ma jāʿa banū abī muslim min maḥram* (the tribe Abū Muslim never come to *maḥram*). See Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān Iʿjāz* in *Thalāth rasāʾil* 51.

Mā qaṭaʿat Usayyid min raṭb wa lā yābis.	The Usayyid never cut anything, neither succulent nor dry.[28]

Having recited the two stanzas above, those who are familiar with the Qurʾānic recitation will immediately notice a similar feature: the use of repetitive oaths in the beginning. The word *wa* (by) is then followed by some objects.[29] The appearance of the phrase *wa-l-layl* in particular is so remarkable that one may be tempted to compare it to the same phrase appearing often in the Meccan revelation—e.g. Q. 91: 1-10; Q. 92: 1-5; Q. 89: 1-6; Q. 74: 32-36; Q. 81: 15-19; Q. 84: 16-20.

Comparison between the phrase *wa-l-layl* contained in the stanzas of Musaylima and those in the above Meccan revelations can be made in the following way:

Wa-l-layl idhā aṭham (stanza *Oaths* A)	*Wa-l-layl al-dāmis* (stanza *Oaths* B)
Wa-l-layl idhā ʿadāhā (stanza *Oaths* D below)	*Wa-l-layl idhā ʿasʿas* (Q. 81: 17)
Wa-l-layl idhā yaghshāhā (Q. 91: 4)	*Wa-l-layl wa mā wasaq* (Q. 84: 17)
Wa-l-layl idhā yaghsā (Q. 92: 1)	
Wa-l-layl idhā sajā (Q. 93: 2)	
Wa-l-layl idhā yasr (Q. 89: 4)	
Wa-l-layl idhā adbar (Q. 74: 33)	

As seen, the phrase *wa-l-layl idhā* found in Musaylima's stanzas follows that of the Qurʾān. The word *layl* denotes a basic concept of time,[30] in which nocturnal contemplation of the night objects is encouraged. Thus, the verses of Qurʾān pair the oaths with celestial objects: sun, moon, earth, sky, night, dawn, and morning. Musaylima' verses, on the other hand, present earthly creatures—wolves and goats. All in all, these Qurʾānic verses and Musaylima's stanzas all observe the surrounding environment.

It is worth lingering to read another stanza (*Oaths* **C**) attributed to Musaylima, which also features oaths:

[28] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 283; trans. Donner, *History* 109; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān* 239; al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt Nubuwwāt* 38. For al-Khaṭṭābī, however, the last line reads: "*Mā ḥarramtuh raṭban illā kaḥurmatih yābis* (I do not prohibit cutting anything that is dry or succulent). See Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān Iʿjāz* in *Thalāth rasāʾil* 51.

[29] According to al-Suyūṭī, many verses of the Qurʾān use *qasam* (oath) to emphasize (*taʾkīd*) the importance of the subjects. With God's names, the Scripture shows His greatness, whereas with His creatures, al-Suyūṭī explains that the sentence was originally composed of *muḍāf* and *muḍāf ilayh* (genitive construction) with God in the beginning followed by His creatures, e.g. *wa shams* (by sun) is originally read as: *wa rabbi al-shamsi* (by the Lord of sun); *wa-l-ṭīn* (by the olive), likewise, is originally read as *wa rabb al-ṭīn* (by the Lord of olive). Interestingly, al-Suyūṭī acknowledges that the Qurʾānic use of the oaths follows the style of pre-Islamic speech tradition. See Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-qurʾān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, n.d.) vol. 4, 46-51; al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī ʿulūm al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1408/1988) vol.3, 45-47.

[30] See, for instance, A. Dallal, "Day and Night" in *EQ*.

Wa-l-shā' wa-l-wānuhā,	By the goats, by their kinds.
Wa aʿjubuhā al-sūd wa albānuhā	By the most remarkable of them-the black ones and their milk
Wa-l-shāt al-sawdā'u	By the black goat
Wa-l-laban al-abyaḍ	By the white milk
Innah la ʿajab maḥaẓ	Indeed it is the wonder of pure milk
Wa qad ḥurrima al-madhq	adulterating milk has been forbidden
Fa mā lakum lā tumajjaʿūn.[31]	So what you have, do not consume date mixed with milk.[32]

Al-Thaʿālābī also preserves another stanza of Musaylima (stanza *Oaths* **D**) with the phrase *wa-l-layl*, which sounds like Q. 91: 1-10. The stanza reads:

Wa-l-shams wa ḍuḥāhā	By the sun and its (glorious) spendour
Fī ḍawʾihā wa munjilāhā	In its shine and its glow
Wa-l-layl idhā ʿadāhā	By the night when it passes
Yaṭlubuhā layaghshāhā	When one desires it [the sun, but] it [the night] conceals it [sun]
Fa adrakahā ḥattā atāhā	Then he knows it [night] when it comes
Wa aṭfaʾ nūruhā famaḥḥāhā.[33]	Then the light turns of and it [night] turns it into pure [darkness].

Stanzas Oaths, A, B, C, and D and the aforementioned verses of the Qurʾān suggest the following formulas with regard to the rhyme schemes:

Stanza A	*am-am-am-am*
Stanza B	*is-is-is*
Stanza D	*ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā*
Q. 91: 1-10	*ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā-ā*
Q. 92: 1-5	*ā-ā-ā-ā-ā*
Q. 93: 1-4	*ā-ā-ā-ā*
Q. 74: 32-36	*ar-ar-ar-ar-ar*
Stanza C	*ā-ā-aẓ-aẓ//aq*
Q. 89: 1-6	*r-r-r-r-r//ad*
Q. 81: 15-19	*as-as-as-as//īm*
Q. 84: 16-20	*aq-aq-aq-aq//ūn*

The rhyme schemes of stanzas A, B, and D are comparable with those of Q. 91: 1-10, Q. 92: 1-5, Q. 74: 32-36, and Q. 93: 1-4. The short rhyme scheme of stanza C, on the other hand, is also similar to Q. 89: 1-6, Q. 81: 15-19, and Q. 84: 16-20.

[31] See Ibn Manẓūr, "*majaʿa*" in his *Lisān*. The root refers to mixing dates and milk and, on another occasion, to something 'unpure.'

[32] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 284; trans. Donner, *History* 109 [mod. mine]; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān* 239; al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt nubuwwāt* 38.

[33] Thaʿālābī, *Thimār* 147.

With regard to similarities between Musaylima's stanzas and the above verses of the Qur'ān, a simpler formula relating to their general organization can perhaps be presented:

- Repetitive oaths
- Statement/main idea.

A more detailed outline can perhaps explain the idea more clearly:

Stanza *Oaths* A:	3 oaths + main idea (negation)
Stanza *Oaths* B:	2 oaths + main idea (negation)
Stanza *Oaths* C:	3 oaths + main idea (declaration + prohibition)
Stanza *Oaths* D:	4 oaths + praises to the beauty of nature
Q. 91: 1-9:	7 oaths + main idea (affirmation)
Q. 92: 1-5:	2 oaths + main idea (affirmation)
Q. 93: 1-4:	2 oaths + main idea (negation)
Q. 89: 1-6:	4 oaths + main idea (interrogation)
Q. 74: 32-36:	3 oaths + main idea (affirmation)
Q. 81: 15-19:	4 oaths + main idea (declaration)
Q. 84: 16-20:	3 oaths + stylistic interval + main idea (interrogation)

To appreciate the usefulness of Musaylima' stanzas, their pattern can be used as paradigm to examine the compositional regularity of the verses of the Qur'ān, as they all share certain points of similarity.

At first glance, none of these stanzas reveals serious religious message. However, stanzas A and B convey something worth considering in that they defend the innocence of the Usayyids. Stanza C seems to contain a message that many would consider trivial: *Fa mā lakum lā tumajjaʿūn* (a prohibition of mixing dates and milk). However, the word *madhq*, placed before the phrase *Fa mā lakum lā tumajjaʿūn*, gives this stanza new significance. According to Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān*, this "*madhq*" has a broader meaning, namely any mixture of certain drinks and foods, e.g, milk and dates. It seems that the meaning of the word *madhq* refers to the opposite of "pure" drink. From this, one could be led to think that Musaylima must have taught his people to follow certain dietary rules. In addition, the word "*maḥaẓ*," which occurs in the same stanza, also refers to 'pure, sincere, or genuine things.'[34] Given this fact, Musaylima seems to have taught his people to live 'pure lives,' an idea that coincides with his teachings to be careful regarding diet. In addition, the phrase *lā tumajjaʿūn* lends support to the idea of 'pureness,' as part of Musaylima's basic teachings.

The message of stanza D contains praises to the beauty of nature, which are also commonly found in the Qur'ān. In addition, the word *fa maḥḥāhā*, which occurs in the last line of stanza D, conveys a meaning close to *khlṣ* (pure), which supports the idea that 'purity' was part of Musaylima's teach-

[34] See Ibn Manzur, "*mahqẓa*" in *Lisān*.

ing. This may explain many words with this meaning appear in his stanzas (see the following discussion about stanza "*Animals*: frog").[35]

Turning now to the rhyme scheme of the Qur'ān, Bell and Watt are skeptical about finding its regularities, arguing that "there is no attempt in the Qur'ān to produce the strict rhyme of poetry."[36] Neuwirth, by contrast, subscribes to view that there are certain unique structures in the rhythm, rhyme, and assonance of Qur'ānic verses, although this pattern is not always simple and fixed. In her analysis, she relies—among other things—on phonetic considerations, including the frequency and variations of rhymes, sounds, etc.[37] To illustrate, the endings *ūn* and *īn*, i.e., of plural verbs, may be seen as a feature which appears often in the middle and the late Meccan revelation.[38] However, like Nöldeke, Neuwirth asserts that many early Meccan *sūras* resemble "*reimlose Verse*" or "*Verse mit isoliertem Reim*."[39] To illustrate this point, Neuwirth notes that the early Meccan verses often reveal quick changes of rhyme scheme, and that the group of rhymes usually consists of very few verses.[40]

Thus, the aforementioned verses of the Qur'ān and Musaylima's stanzas share the same characteristics. Unlike what most Muslim authors believe, this does not necessarily mean that Musaylima merely imitated the Qur'ān delivered by Muhammad. Rather, this reflects the fact that the two prophets shared the same milieu and religious tradition. Moreover, the assumption that one prophet simply imitated the other must have come at a much later time after Musaylima had been defeated.

[35] It is not difficult to conclude that Musaylima's cult and early Islam share another basic concept in common: both stress the fundamental concept of 'pureness.' To illustrate the case of Islam, during the meeting between Prophet Muḥammad and Abū ʿĀmir, the former stresses this concept by saying that he only brought the pure version of *ḥanīf*, when accused of making the *ḥanīf* unpure (see chapter eight earlier).

The concept of purity has played a central role in Islam. First, it is embodied in both rituals (*ʿibāda*) and *muʿāmala* (social life). Moreover, this teaching can easily be found in almost all collections of the prophetic traditions—*saḥīḥs* or *sunans*—and *fiqhs* (Islamic law), which all place *kitāb al-ṭahāra* (chapter on purification) at the beginning of the discussion.

Of course, the sophisticated concept of purity in Islam is not comparable whatsoever with its mere embryo in Musaylima's stanzas. However, one can perhaps assert here that Musaylima's stanzas, like Meccan Islam, contain at least such an embryo—a fact that is evident in the usages of more vocabularies in his stanzas.

[36] Bell and Watt, *Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977) 27-28, 69. Ref. Cited.

[37] A. Neuwirth, *Studien zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981) 75.

[38] Neuwirth, *Studien* 79.

[39] Neuwirth, *Studien* 92.

[40] Neuwirth, *Studien* 98 and 100. Pierre Crapon de Caprona also studies the 'metrical affinities' of the verses of the Qur'ān. He classifies the *sūras* of the Qur'ān—based on metrical affinities, as mono, double, and multi patterned *sūra*. See his *Le Coran: aux sources de la parole oraculaire: Structures rhythmiques des sourates mecquoises* (Paris: Orientalistes de France, 1981).

The similarities of stanza *Creation* D with Q. 87 is worth recalling here. Al-Balansī reports that during the meeting between Mujjāʿa b. Murāra and Khālid b. Wālid shortly after the Battle of Yamāma (see chapter seven above), Khālid asked Mujjāʿa how he countered Musaylima's verses, in response to this, Mujjāʿa then recited Q. 87: 1. If this story contains any grain of truth, it may lend weight to the idea that Musaylima might also have revealed a stanza similar to Q. 87, which prompted Mujjāʿa to compare with similar verses of the Qurʾān. Additionally, stanza *Creation* D does not contain any elements which dishonour Musaylima. One may then wonder why Muslim authors attribute such a positive stanza to Musaylima, their nemesis. Likewise, stanza *Oaths* D, which sounds similar to Q. 91: 1-10, also contains message with the same 'good' quality as stanza *Creation* D.

All in all, the aforementioned verses of the Qurʾān contain a much more universal message than Musaylima's stanzas do. As such, one may be inclined to think that Musaylima's prophetic mission reflected less universal vision than that of Muḥammad. It may be true that the prophet from Yamāma was born earlier than his rival in Medina, but his career always remained that of a local *kāhin*, which could not surpass the career of Muḥammad.

The Spirit of Tribalism

In the following stanza *Tribalism* **A**, Musaylima praises his neighbours, the tribe Tamīm:

Inna banī Tamīmin qawm ṭahr laqāḥ[41]	The tribe Tamīm is a people of purity and [quite] responsible
Lā makrūha ʿalayhim wa lā itāwa	Nothing can force them and nothing can influence them
Nujāwiruhum mā ḥayyinā bi iḥsān	Let us form allies with them to stand in goodness as long as we live
Numniʿuhum min kulli insān	Let us protect every person of them
Fa idhā mutnā fa amruhum ilā al-raḥmān	When we die, we will be returned to the Merciful One.[42]

The above stanza is comparable to Q. 106, which deals with the same specific Arab tribe, the Quraysh, which can be said to be the only tribe contempo-

[41] The word *laqāḥ*, whih refers to the quality of wind, also appears in Q. 15: 22. In the above stanza, however, the word conveys a rather metaphorical meaning, as the word originally means "to impregnate" or "to fecundate" flowers of female palm trees from those of male ones via the wind. See also, Ibn Manẓūr, "*laqāḥ*" in *Lisān*. The translation of "responsible" here is due to the qualities attributed to the tribe Tamīm with regards to the ethical value of *iḥsān* and *jiwār* that they respected.

[42] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 283-4. The above translation is modified from that of Donner, *The History* 109.

rary of Muḥammad, which the Qur'ān mentions explicitly.[43] To present the *sūra*:

Li'īlāf quraysh	For the covenants of the Quraysh
Īlāfihim riḥlat al-shitā' wa-l-ṣayf	Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and Summer
Falya'budū rabb hādha al-bayt	Let them worship the Lord of this House
Al-ladhī aṭ'amahum min jū' wa amanahum min khawf	Who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear

The following table compares stanza *Tribalism* A and Q. 106:

Fig. 9. 2

Point of comparison	Q. 106	Stanza *Tribalism* A
Tribe	Quraysh	Tamīm
Virtue	With its covenant, traveling in the winter and summer	With purity and independence, paying tribute to none
Call	To worship the Lord (*'ibāda*)	To be allies and to protect its members (*iḥsān, jiwār*)
God	The Lord of the House (*Rabb*)	The Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*)
God's role	Provides food and security (the presence of God in man's life)	After death, all human matters should be returned to Him (eschatology)

As seen in the table, Q. 106 praises the Quraysh, whereas Musaylima's stanza does so the Tamīm. The Quraysh are described to have firmly held their *ilāf* (covenant),[44] which enabled them to travel in the winter and summer.[45] They are also said to have devotedly served the Lord of the Ka'ba.[46] The Tamīm in stanza *Tribalism* A, on the other hand, are praised for their purity and responsibility, and for allying themselves with other tribes and for protecting one another. Interestingly, God is mentioned in both texts. For the Qur'ān, He is the Lord of the Ka'ba (*rabb hādha al-bayt*), whereas for Musaylima's stanza He is the Merciful one (*al-raḥmān*).

With regard to the mention of *rabb* in Q. 106 (instead of *al-raḥmān*), Noldeke's theory is worth mentioning here. If Q. 106 is dated as an early Meccan revelation, the word *al-raḥmān*, which was introduced only in the second

[43] Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur'ān*, ed. Edmund Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) vol. 2, 587.

[44] The covenant here involves the bond and brotherhood among the people. See al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1407/1989) vol. 30, 198.

[45] The travel here refers to those made by the Meccans to Ṭā'if, Yemen and al-Shām; see Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'* vol. 30, 199.

[46] For the meaning of this house as the *Ka'ba*, see Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'* vol. 30, 199.

Meccan period, was not yet in use.[47] Bell, who is often critical of Nöldeke, agrees that Q. 106 is a very early Meccan *sūra*, whose content praises the Quraysh and which has 'no proper rhyme'. In addition, this *sūra* must have been revealed sometime before the antagonism arose between the Prophet and the Quraysh. Otherwise, the praises must not have been bestowed upon them.[48]

As with stanzas *Oaths* C and D, stanza *Tribalism* A also contains the crude concept of 'purity,' indicated by the presence of the word *ṭahrun*. What makes this concept a little more distinguished is that it is followed by another word, *laqāḥ*. This seems to suggest certain ethical teaching of Musaylima.

Iḥsān-Insān-al-Raḥmān

We can perhaps deduce some teachings of Musaylima from the following key words contained in Stanza *Tribalism* A:

- *Iḥsān* (goodness)
- *Insān* (human)
- *al-Raḥmān* (the Merciful/God).

The word *iḥsān* appears in a more complete sentence: *Nujāwiruhum mā ḥayyinā bi iḥsān* (Let us form allies with them to stand in goodness as long as we live). The word *iḥsān* seems to relate to the concept of *jiwār*, which is commonly found in the tribal system of Arabs.[49] Recalling the story which

[47] According to Nöldeke's theory of the chronology of the revelation of the Qur'ān, the word *al-raḥmān* appears only in the second Meccan period of the revelation of the Qur'ān. Watt and Bell, however, disagree with Nöldeke's use of *al-raḥmān* as an indicator of the chronology of the Qur'an, by arguing that the use of the word cannot be restricted to a certain period of time. See Bell and Watt, *Introduction* 111. Se also n. 48 below.

Without delving into this matter more deeply, we may speculate as follows. The word *al-raḥmān* had been known by both Meccan and Yamāmite audiences as a name commonly attributed to God, before both Muḥammad and Musaylima employed it. Thus, the two prophets did not invent a new concept of *al-raḥmān* out of thin air; both rather adopted it from the common usage in the religious tradition of their contemporary society. For more discussion on the use of the word in the pre-Islamic time, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte* vol. 1, 112-113, n. 3; A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabularies of the Qur'ān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938) 140-141; A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammeds nach Bisher Grösstentheils Unbenutzten Quellen* (Berlin: Nicolai'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861) vol. 2, 198-210.

[48] See n. 41 above.

[49] See Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) 17-20. The concept of tribal solidarity must have been related to *ḥilf* ('confederacy and mutual oaths') and *jiwār* ('formal granting of protection'), which had connection to the guarantee of the members' security. However, it is noteworthy that this system was not static. Abū Lahab's protection of Muḥammad, for example, changed after the antagonism arose between the Muslims and the Pagans. Nonetheless, J. Lecerf relates this *jiwār* to an ancient Hebrew concept of seeking asylum in 'holy places,' such as temples, which had begun as early as 14 BC. See, Lecerf, "Djiwār" in *EI²*.

occurred between Musaylima and the Tamīm, there must have been a special relation between the two, for why else would Musaylima praise the tribe? It is worth remembering that Hawdha—with the support of al-Aʿshā—formed an alliance with Persians against the Tamīm (see chapter seven above). Musaylima, however, must have changed the political direction of Yamāma by allying himself with the Tamīm, whose prophetess Sajāḥ married him. Given this fact, one may speculate that while Hawdha was in power, Musaylima might have remained in Haddar, where he was born. There, Musaylima did not involve himself yet in the political realm of Yamāma. Instead, he must have focused his prophetic activities in his own village. After Hawdha died, Musaylima then assumed the leadership of Ḥajar, the capital of Yamāma.

One may also be tempted to imagine another version of the story. When Hawdha died—as the Persians had also declined earlier—the political relationship between Yamāma and the Persians must have lost its significance. Whereas Thumāma, Musaylima's political rival, sought an alliance with Medina, Musaylima must have consolidated his power in Yamāma, by allying himself with the Tamīm in order to maintain the independence of his region.

The word *insān*, which plays a central role in the early revelation of the Qurʾān and in the previous stanzas of Musaylima (stanza *Creation* A, B, C and D), is present in stanza *Tribalism* A. It seems unfair, however, to compare the sophisticated concept of *insān* conveyed by the Qurʾān with that of Musaylima, for we have the whole Scripture at our disposal, but only a limited number of Musaylima's verses. Yet we can trace the development of he word in the Meccan and early Medinan revelation.

The word *iḥsān* occurs in the following verses: Q. 2: 178, 229, 83; 9: 101; 4: 61; 46: 15; 55: 60; 16: 90, which deal with human deeds. To look at the gradual development of the meaning of *iḥsān*, in the early Meccan verses, such as in Q. 55: 60, the word is mentioned but with no reference to a detailed concept. The verse reads: '*hal jazāʾ al-iḥsān illā al-iḥsān*" (is there any reward for good other than good?), an expression which seems to have originally served as a rhetorical question in asserting that anyone who does good things will receive reward later. The meaning of *iḥsān* here, however, remains unspecific.

In the later Meccan period, such as in Q. 16: 90, the word conveys clearer meaning: "God commands justice, the doing of good (*iḥsān*), and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion." *Iḥsān* in this verse is portrayed more specifically as follows: treating everyone gently, doing justice (*ʿadl*), avoiding shameful deeds (*fakhsā*), injustice (*munkar*), and rebellion (*baghy*). In the Medinan period, such as in Q. 46: 15 and 2: 83, the word *iḥsān* is related to more practical and clearer illustration of the daily life, such as: "Worship one God; treat with kindness (*iḥsān*) your parents and kindred (*qurbā*), orphans (*yatāmā*) and those in need (*masākīn*); speak fair to the people (*ḥusnan*). Be steadfast in prayer (*ṣalāh*); and practice regular charity (*zakāh*)."

In view of these examples, the content of Musaylima's stanza (referring to a dim meaning of *iḥsān*) and those of the Qur'ān revealed during Medinan period (conveying a rather detailed, practical, and clear concept) are incomparable. However, the stanza is comparable to the early Meccan verse, such as verse Q. 55: 60, in which *iḥsān* conveys a dim meaning, providing no specific practical guide. The slight difference is that verse Q. 55: 60 tells us about the reward for those who performed virtuous deeds, whereas Musaylima's stanza suggest that all matters in the end must be returned to the Merciful.

The late Meccan revelation, such as Q. 16: 90 provides specific guidance for performing *iḥsān*, such as by doing *ʿadl*, avoiding *fakshā*, *munkar*, and *baghy*. In this vein, these concepts are comparable to Musaylima's verses in that the stanza also calls for *jiwār*, a concept which encompasses treating neighbours kindly and giving protection to allies and which harkens back to the basic ethics of tribal and nomadic life. Q. 16: 90 rather refers specifically to life in a more settled community, by calling upon its members to avoid making any disturbance within it and to maintain their loyalty to it.

Musaylima's stanza, like Q. 106, calls for stability in communal life. Moreover, the stanza clearly portrays the old tribal system of Arabs (*jiwār*), whereas Q. 16 seems to describe the transition period between an unsettled community and the emergence of a more established one (*umma*). Unlike Q. 106 which portrays the Qurasyh as travelers, Q. 16: 90 portrays the above transition: from wandering to a settled community. This transition might have taken place during the late period of Mecca or early Medina.

Whereas the relation of *iḥsān* and *jiwār* is contained in Musaylima's stanza *Tribalism* A, an early Medinan verse—Q. 33: 60—also contains the word *jiwār* with more or less the same meaning, regardless of any different contexts between Medina and Yamāma. The verse reads:

> Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is disease, and those who stir up sedition in the city, desist not, we shall certainly stir you up against them: then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbours (*yajāwirūnaka*) for any length time.

It is clear that the above verse depicts the life of the Muslim community in the early Medinan period with the illustration of their conflict against hostile neighbours, e.g. the tribes of Nāḍir and Qurayẓa.

Turning to our keywords *iḥsān* and *al-raḥmān* which verses Q. 55: 1-4[50] also contain, the above stanza *Tribalism* A and these verses agree that *al-raḥmān*

[50] It is interesting here that Nöldeke's theory of the chronology of the revelation of the Qurʿān is self-contradictory. That is, the word *al-raḥmān* (55: 1), according to Nöldeke, is one of the key words that was only used from the second period of Meccan revelation to early Medinan period. This *sūra*, however, is classified as an early Meccan revelation, but it contains '*al-raḥmān*.'

Bell, on the other hand, subscribes to the interesting view that he accepts Nöldeke's dating of Q. 55, but he regards that the specific word *al-raḥmān* belongs to Medinan words. Bell sug-

referred to God, the creator of *insān*. The message of Q. 55, however, offers a more sophisticated concept. Not only does *al-raḥmān* here denote the Creator to whom all of *insān*'s matters must be returned, it also implies His central role as the teacher of *insān*.

Love your people and city

It is also said that Musaylima hails the tribe Ḥanīfa in his speech, (stanza *Tribalism* **B**), whose translation runs as follows:

> O tribe Ḥanīfa, I want you to tell me based on what [ground] the Quraysh is more deserving of prophethood and leadership than you are. By God, they are no more numerous than you are and no braver. Indeed, your land is far wider than theirs. Your wealth is more than theirs. Indeed, Jibrīl (peace be upon him) has come to me everyday with the matters that I want [to consult to him]. He descended [to me] in the same way as he previously had descended to Muḥammad b. ʿAbdalla. Then, here is al-Rajjāl b. Nahshal and Muḥkam b. al-Ṭufayl, the nobles of the people of Yamāma. Both bore witness to me that Muḥammad b. ʿAbdalla had made partnership with me in prophethood before his death.[51]

It may well be that Musaylima, known to be an excellent orator, delivered the above speech. Imagine that in order to raise the spirit of his people, Musaylima compared the quality of Ḥanīfa and Yamāma to that of Quraysh and Mecca in his speech. However, due to the long and detailed content, it is fair to speculate that it resulted from embellishments by later narrators. The above text—which tells us about the people, land, revelation, and companions of Musaylima—serves more as a summary of the story of Musaylima than as a record of his speech.

Al-Thaʿālābī, however, presents a shorter version, stanza *Tribalism* **C**, which features the pattern of *sajʿ* and which reads:

gests that the feature of the whole *sūra* 55 indicates many later revisions that took place at a later period. Thus, the word *al-raḥmān*, according to Bell, was inserted into the earlier version of Q. 55 during the later process of editing. See Bell, *A Commentary* vol. 2, 329.

In addition, Bell also suspects an evolution of the meaning of the word "qurʾān" contained by 55: 2. This word, says Bell, originally means a broader 'art of reciting' and it did not originally refer to the Qurʾān as a specific Scripture, as later Muslims commonly hold. Rather, the change of meaning was due to later Muslim interpreters. Bell goes further by saying that "the reference may be wider and include other forms of Qurʾān [readings]." See Bell, *A Commentary* vol. 2, 329.

It is also interesting to see some new meanings introduced by Early Muslim exegetes. Al-Ṭabarī, for instance, still preserves the interpretation of Qatāda on the word *insān*, referring to Adam, who is likely later interpretation. The word seems to refer to man in general. See Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* vol. 27, 67.

[51] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 108-109; Aḥmad b. Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *al-Futūḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿIlmiyya, 1406/1989) vol. 1, 24-25.

Yā banī Ḥanīfa[52]	O tribe Ḥanīfa
Ma jaʿala Allāh quraysh bi aḥaqq bi-l-nubuwwa minkum	What God made the Quraysh more deserving in prophethood than you?
Wa bilādikum awsaʿ min bilādihim	Your land is wider than theirs is
Wa sawādukum akthar min sawādihim	You are more numerous than they are
Wa jibrīl yunazzilu ʿalā ṣāḥibikum mithl mā yunazzilu ʿalā ṣāḥibihim.[53]	Jibrīl descended to your companion the way as he descended to their companion.

What attracts our attention is that Jibrīl is specifically mentioned in Musaylima's stanza *Tribalism* B and C. This provides another point of similarity between the beliefs of early stage of Islam and those of Musaylima. That said, the Angel must have played a central role in the revelation of Muḥammad and Musaylima, serving as intercessor between this world and the divine one and embodying a virtuous spirit, as opposed to evil ones, such as Jinn or Satan. Interestingly, Musaylima—just as Muḥammad was accused of being *majnūn* by his opponents (Q. 81: 22 and 25)—was also accused of praticing *siḥr* (magic). Al-Jāhiẓ (d. 255/869)[54] reports that Musaylima often visited many markets—ʿUbula, Baqqā, Anbar, and Ḥīra—to perform his magic. If the prophet from Yamāma was able to reattach a bird's severed wings and put an egg in a bottle, what kind of spirit was he working with?

According to Musaylima's own words in stanza *Tribalism* B and C, the answer is: with an angel, namely Jibrīl. For his enemies, however, especially after his defeat, it was simply trickery or magic. "[Musaylima] mixed many techniques of trickery and magic," writes al-Jāhiẓ. Musaylima also mixed the skills of "interpretation of dreams and prophethood. He mastered the tricks of gatekeepers [i.e., picking locks], oracles, soothsayers, magicians, and worked with *jinn* that accompanied him."

What also interests us here is the presence of a bird, which is a symbol of the angel and is related to Musaylima's miracle of prophethood. On the one hand, Musaylima was able to show his miracle to Mujjāʿa (for more on him see chapters seven and eleven), his family, and other people of Yamāma by performing magic with this animal. He made the bird fly in the darkness although its wings had been cut off, a sign of miracle which led Mujjāʿa to believe in Musaylima's prophethood. Having demonstrated his miracle, Musaylima declared: "I asked God to perform this [miracle], and He make it

52 The word *yā* in the beginning of the above stanza is commonly found in the Qurʾān, such as *yā banī ādam, yā ayyuha al-nās, yā ayyuh al-ladhīna āmanū, yā ayyuha al-kāfirūn*, etc.

53 Thaʿālābī, *Thimār* 146-147. Both al-Thaʿālibī and Kister, however, do not treat the above text as a *sajʿ*. See Kister "The Struggle" 7.

54 Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1408/1988) vol. 4, 369-378.

[the bird] fly, and you bore witness to it. Do you bear witness, too, that I am the messenger of God [sent] to you?" Their response was yes.[55]

On the other hand, Musaylima also told his people that the angel came to him in the form of a flying bird. Some people are said to have been invited to stay in the prophet's house to see this. The angel is said to have come in the dark from the sky.[56]

Equally interesting is that during the meeting of Musaylima and Sajāḥ, al-Wāqidī tells us, Musaylima delivers another stanza (*Tribalism* **D**) that addresses 'the spirit of tribalism':

Lā uqsim bi hādha al-balad	I do not call to witness this city
Wa la tabrahā hādha al-balad	And do not leave from this city
Ḥattā kakun dhā māl wa walad	Until you have wealth and child
Wa wafar wa ṣafad	And [you] grow numerous and are bound to it [the city]
Wa khayl wa ʿadad	So imagine and reckon
Ilā ākhir al-abad	Until the end of time
Alā raghm man ḥasad	In spite of those who envy.[57]

Certainly, this stanza sounds similar to Q. 90: 1-5 both in terms of rhymed-scheme and content. The many points of similarity between the two texts—also in terms of content—lead us to speculate that both prophets called upon the people to love their city. Moreover, it may well be that the Meccans and the people of Yamāma also shared 'this spirit of tribalism.' The question remains how sound is the transmission of al-Wāqidī.

Ibn Kathīr also relates that after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, Musaylima grew bolder in claiming his prophethood independently and declaring therefore the following *rajaz* (stanza *Tribalism* **E**):

Khudī al-daff ya hādhih wa-l-abī	O you, take the tambourine and play
Fa buthth maḥāsin hādha al-nabī	And proclaim the merits of this prophet

[55] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* vol. 4, 372.

[56] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* vol. 4, 373-374. It is worth noting that the presence of two birds also marks The Prophethood of Umayya b. Abī Salṭ. The two birds, it is said, came to him to perform surgery as indication of his miracle. Umayya then welcomed both, by saying "*labbaykumā, labbaykumā.*" This flying animal seems to have played a vital role in the pre-Islamic religious tradition and mythology. In fact, one of the earliest Meccan revelations, namely Q. 105, still preserves the story of some powerful birds (*ṭayr abābīl*) which tormented the famous Companions of the Elephant who had wanted to destroy the Kaʿba in Mecca. In addition, the people of Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān, a pre-Islamic prophet, are also said to have been destroyed, and certain birds also played a role in their story. See Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Khayriyya, 1306) vol. 1, 410. Given this, it is plausible to suggest that the source of that symbolic relationship between angels and birds existed in the pre-Islamic religious beliefs of Arabs. See also, for instance, D. B. MacDonald "Mala'ika" in *EI²*.

[57] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Ridda* 111; Aḥmad b. Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *al-Futūḥ* vol. 1, 28.

Tawallā nabīy banī hāshimī	The prophet of the tribe Hashim passed away
Wa qāma nabī banī ya'rubī	And the prophet of the tribe Ya'rub rose up.[58]

Animals

As seen earlier, stanzas *Oaths* A, B, and C use animals—goats and wolves—as objects of oaths. The following Musaylima's stanzas, which contain less serious messages, employ other kinds of animals—frog, elephant, and coney—as themes.

Frog

Stanza *Animals* A:

Yā ṣifdaʾ ibnat ṣifdaʾ	Oh frog, daughter of a frog
Nuqqī mā tanaqqīn	Croak so much you croak
Aʿlāki fī-l-māʾ wa asfalaki fī-l-ṭīn	Your upper part is in the water, whereas your lower part [remains] in the mud
Lā al-shārib tamnaʿī(n)	Do not bar any drinker
Wa lā al-māʾ tukaddarī(n)	Nor make the water turbid.[59]

Ibn Kathīr[60] and Ibn Taymiyya[61] present another different version, which reads (stanza *Animals* **B**):

Ya ṣibdaʾ ibnat[62] zifdayn (īn)	
Nuqqī kum[63] tanaqqīn	
Lā al-māʾ tukaddarī(n)	
Wa lā al-shārib tamnaʿī(n)	
Raʾsuki fi al-māʾ wa dhanbuki fi al-ṭīn	Your head is in the water, whereas your tail [remains] in the land.

Al-Khaṭṭābī presents a rather short version (stanza *Animals* **C**):

[58] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 341; modification from trans. Kister, "The Struggle Against Musaylima" 23. See also the discussion of the use of *rajaz* in stanza *Battle* A and B below.

[59] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 284; trans. Donner, *History* 109; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 361. Trans modified from Donner; Awad Muaiwed Al-Jemaey, "al-Rummānī's al-Nukat fi Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān: An Annoted Translation with Introduction," Ph.D dissertation, Indiana University, 1987, 157-158; J. Bouman, *Le Conflict autour du Coran et la Solution d'al-Baqillani* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij en Uitgerij Jacob van Campen, 1959) 64. The above plural endings—*tamnaʿī(n)* and *tukaddarī(n)*—sound problematic, if we position them as *nahī* (negative-imperative form), as the subject *ṣifdaʾ* is a female singular noun. However, it seems that the verb changes from *nahī* into *muḍāriʿ* (present form), for the sake of rhyme-scheme. I am indebted to Prof. Reichmuth for reminding me about this.

[60] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya* vol. 6, 326.

[61] Ibn Taymiyya, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿUmayra (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1408/1988) vol. 2, 157.

[62] Ibn Kathīr reads *bint*.

[63] Ibn Kathīr reads *lakum*.

Ya ẓifdaʾ nuqqi kum tanaqqīn
La al-māʾ tukaddarī(n)
Wa lā al-warid tunfarīn[64] Do not runn away from the bush.

Al-Ṭabarī also records a rather different version of the stanza, with the following story: after the victory of the Battle of Yamāma, Khālid sent a delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa to Abū Bakr in Medina, who then asked one of the members about Musaylima's verses. The man then reads (stanza *Animals* **D**):

Ya ẓifdaʾ naqqi niqqā
La al-shārib tamnaʿīn
Wa lā al-māʾ tukaddarīn
Lanā niṣf al-ard
Wa li quraysh niṣf al-arḍ
Walakin quraysh qawm yaʿtadūn[65]

The last three lines are a repetition of Musaylima's words in his letter to Muḥammad (see chapter one earlier). Al-Bāqillānī and al-Hārūnī, however, presents the following version (stanza *Animals* **E**):

Ẓifdaʾ bint zifdaʾayn
Naqqi mā tanaqqīn
Aʿlāka fi al-māʾ wa asfalaki fi al-ṭīn
La shārib tamnaʿīn
Wa lā al-māʾa tukaddarīn
Lanā niṣf al-arḍ wa li quraysh niṣfuhā
Walakin quraysh qawm yaʿtadun [66]

Al-Kalāʿī also presents the longest version (stanza *Animals* **F**), which reads:

Ya ẓifdaʾ bint zifzaʾayn
Laḥasan ma tunqaniqīn How wonderful is what you are croaking
La al-shārib tamnaʿīn
Wa lā al-māʾ tukaddarīn
Umkuthī fi al-ard ḥattā yaʾtīka Remain in the land until the bat
al-khaffās bi-l-khabari al-yaqīn comes to you with convincing news
Lana niṣf al-arḍ wa liquarysh
niṣfuha walakin quraysh qawm la yaʿdilūn[67]

64 Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān iʿjāz al-qurʾān* 50.

65 Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 300; trans. Donner, *History* 133; al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi mā li nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafaḍa wa-l-matāʿ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999) vol. 14, 529; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt ibn ḥubaysh/Kitāb al-ghazawāt al-ḍāmina al-kāmila wa-l-futūḥ al-jāmiʿa al-ḥāfila al-kāʾina fi ayyām al-khulafāʾ al-awwal al-thalātha: Abī bakr al-ṣiddīq was abī ḥafṣ ʿumar wa abī ʿamr dhī al-nūrayn ʿuthmān*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992) vol. 1, 57. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, however, presents only the first three lines of the stanza, but leaves the rest; see his *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, eds. Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣāwī, Ghulām Riḍā Aʿwānī (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy, 1977) 263.

66 Al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān* 239; Al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt Nubuwwāt* 38.

67 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda, Iqtabasa min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970) 117-118.

The second and fifth lines of the above stanza, which are not found in the previous versions, are newly introduced by al-Kalāʿī. Al-Ṭabarī relates that upon hearing this, Abū Bakr stated: "These words did not come from righteousness and goodness (*mā kharaja min illin wa lā birrin*)."[68] It is interesting to follow the evolution of this story in the later literature. Al-Thaʿālābī, for instance, relates the comments of the caliph to stanza *Oaths* D, *Creation* D, and *Teachings* C below.[69] However, the caliph, according to Ibn Kathīr, listened to two other stanzas: *Animal* A and *Women* below.[70] It may well be that the earlier report preserves the story of the caliph with the delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa. Later narrators, however, differed from one another with regards to which stanza was read in front of the caliph and therefore interpreted Abū Bakr's words differently. Al-Bāqillānī holds that the word *illin* refers to divinity (*rubūbiyya*).[71] According to al-Khaṭṭābī, however, what Abū Bakr said is not *illin*, but *min bālin* (sound mind).[72]

In terms of the content, it is plausible that there were frogs in the ferlile land of Yamāma, where water, either from rain or irrigation, could easily be found. The mention of a frog in this stanza does not contradict the environmental nature of this region. The question is whether the transmitter treated Musaylima's stanza fairly. The discrepancies found in the many versions indicate the recklessness of the presentation. Their content reflects nothing but light-heartedness. What also remains uncertain is whether these stanzas were pure invention or a distortion of earlier Musaylima's revelation.

It may well be that Musaylima used to recite one or more stanza with a frog as their theme. As with stanzas *Oaths* C and D earlier, Musaylima's teachings may be drawn from stanza *Animals* frog. Take the following message: "*Wa lā al-māʾ tukadar(īn)*/Do not make the water turbid." Consider this part of the message seriously—it does make sense that Musaylima wanted to keep the water in Yamāma clean, a message that might have been one of his teachings. However, not only has the meaning of this stanza been ignored, its entire message has often been distorted.

For the aforementioned reasons, only the following four lines of the whole stanza *frog* (stanza *Animals* **G**) may indicate their proper attribution to Musaylima.

Yā ḍifdaʿ

La shārib tamnaʿīn

[68] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh al-rusul*, vol. 3, 300; trans. Donner, *The History* 133.

[69] Thaʿālābī, *Thimār* 147.

[70] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 326.

[71] Al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qurʾān* 240.

[72] Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān iʿjāz* 51.

Wa lā al-mā' tukaddarīn

Lanā niṣf al-arḍ wa li quraysh niṣfuhā walakin quraysh qawm ya'tadūn

With regard to the last line included in the reconstruction above, it is worth recalling that this phrase also becomes part of Musaylima's letter to Muḥammad (see chapter one). It stands to reason that Musaylima, like Muḥammad who cites the verse of the Qur'ān in his answer to Musaylima (see chapter four), quotes his revelation in his letter to Muḥammad.

Elephant

Equally interesting is that *i'jāz* literature preserves a stanza attributed to Musaylima which mentions elephant (stanza *Animals* **H**):

Al-fīl	The elephant
Wa mā al-fīl	What is the elephant?,
Wa mā adrāka ma al-fīl	Who shall tell you what is elephant?
Lahu mashfar ṭawīl	It has a poor tail
Wa dhanb athīl	And a long trunk
Wa mā dhāka min khalq rabbunā bi qalīl	[It] is a trifling part of the creations of your God.[73]

Ibn Kathīr, however, presents a shorter version (stanza *Animals* **I**), consisting of only three lines:

Al-fīl	
Wa mā adrāka ma al-fīl	
Lah zulum ṭawīl.[74]	It has a long trunk.

At first glance, one can hardly avoid the impression that the simple stanza's later distortion above must have been caused by the deteriorating image of Musaylima as an imitator of the Qur'ān, when the doctrine of *i'jāz* had matured. Declaring Qur'ān's superiority to other inferior works was a common practice. Presenting the above stanza is likely justified by at least two key reasons: its inferior quality and its similarity to Q. 105 in terms of theme and to Q. 101: 1-3 or 69: 1-3 in terms of style.

Compared to Q. 105, however, stanza *Animals* E obviously displays a less serious message. To illustrate, Q. 105 tells the well-known legend of the Companions of the Elephant, whereas stanza *Animals* H (lines 4 and 5) and stanza

[73] Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān i'jāz al-qur'ān* 51; trans. D. S. Margaliouth, "The Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Hanif," *JRAS* 35 (1903) 488; Bouman, J. *Le Conflict autour du Coran et la Solution d'al-Baqillani* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij en Uitgerij Jacob van Campen, 1959) 49.

[74] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 326.

Animals I (lines 2 and 3) seem merely to tell children about this type of animal. Thus, it does not need an excellent orator prophet like Musaylima to do so.

However, if one removes lines 4 and 5 from stanza H, it exhibits an entirely different quality[75] (stanza *Animals* **J**):

Al-fīl	The elephant
Wa mā al-fīl	What is the elephant?
Wa mā adrāka mā al-fīl	Who shall tell you what is elephant?
Wa mā dhāka min khalq rabbunā bi qalīl	[It] is a trifling part of the creations of thy God.

As has been argued elsewhere, Musaylima and Muḥammad must have shared the style and content of their revelation. It thus stands to reason that Musaylima uttered the stanza which mentions elephant in the same way that the Prophet mentions it in Q. 105. As with the case of the *Animals* frog stanza, later narrators seem to have distorted Musaylima's stanza *Animals* elephant and turned it into nothing but amusement. However, certain moral lessons can also be discovered in the stanza elephant after it has been reconstructed. Thus, Musaylima, just as the Prophet Muḥammad, might have taught his people to observe certain creatures in order to contemplate their Creator.

Coney

Ibn Kathīr preserves another stanza of Musaylima which also deals with animals, namely *wabar* (coney/*hyrax syriaca*).[76] A story related to this stanza is also presented. ʿAmr b. ʿĀṣ b. Wāʾil b. Hāshim, a Meccan traveler and trader, is reported to have frequently visited Yamāma. During their meeting, Musaylima asked ʿAmr about the revelation which Muḥammad had received. In response, ʿAmr recited Q. 103 (*al-ʿAṣr*). Upon hearing this, Musaylima said that he also recieved a revelation similar to that of Muḥammad, which reads (stanza *Animals* **K**):

Yā wabar yā wabar	O coney, o coney
Wa innamā anta īrād wa ṣadar	You, indeed, come and go

[75] Gadamer says: "Es ist im Grunde kein selbständiges Moment mehr im systematischen Ganzen der Ästhetik". See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I, Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philsophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986) 64. The audience's *Erlebnis* (lit. experience and consciousness) plays a vital role in nurturing the concept of 'beauty.' Thus, the belief in the superiority of the Qurʾān over Musaylima's stanzas cannot be divorced from this religious 'experience' in the form of piety, which leads to that assumption. By contrast, Musaylima's stanzas have no audience who may appreciate their messages. For more on the importance of audience's role and *Erlebnis* in Gadamer's thesis, see his *Hermeneutik I* 70-76; and 115-116.

[76] The word *wabar* has many connotations, one of which refers to 'furry animals' such as camel (consider Q. 80: 16). The Beduoins are also called *ahl al-wabar*. Among the references of *wabar* to *hyrax syriaca* can be found in Ibn Manẓūr, "*wabar*" in *Lisān*. The Qurʾān makes no mention of this animal, which, however, appears in the *Old Testament*: Deuteronomy 14: 7; Psalms 104: 18; and Proverbs 30: 26.

Wa sā'irika ḥafar naqar	And the rest [of your kind live] in holes, burrowing.[77]

Both the story and the stanza, according to Jawād ʿAlī, are likely unsound. Q. 103, says ʿAlī, had been revealed very early in Mecca, before Musaylima claimed his prophethood. Another contradition, ʿAlī also argues, is that if ʿAmr had visited Yamāma in that period, he had not converted to Islam yet. It is possible, however, that ʿAmr might have often visited Yamāma as a trader. What led ʿAlī to doubt this story is that ʿAmr intended to visit Musaylima.[78] Jawād ʿAlī's argument, however, is weak. Although Q. 103 had been revealed in the very early Meccan period, this story does not contradict the idea that ʿAmr recited the *sūra* later during his meeting with Musaylima. Jawād ʿAlī also contradicts himself in that he acknowledges on another occasion that Musaylima proclaimed prophethood as early as the beginning of the Meccan period of Islam (see chapter eight earlier).

Al-Khaṭṭābī presents a rather divergent story, explaining that Muḥammad sent ʿAmr b. ʿĀs to Baḥrayn shortly prior to the Prophet's death. During his meeting with Musaylima, ʿAmr heard the following stanzas: stanza *Animals* C (frog), *Oaths* A and B, and *Animals* K (coney). However, according to al-Khaṭṭābī, the coney stanza (*Animals* **L**) reads differently:

Yā wabar yā wabar	
Yadān wa ṣadar	[You have] two hands and a body
Wa sā'iruka ḥaḍar wa nafar[79]	And the rest of you come and go.

What may lead us to doubt the attribution of the above stanza to Musaylima is that it is also considered to be a general saying of the Arabs and unconnected to any specific author.[80] Moreover, the second line of the above stanza shows similarities to stanzas *Animals* (frogs) and *Animals* (elephants) in the way it describes these animals with their simple nature. Another factor that lends weight to the idea of later fabrication of stanza *Animals* K and *Animals* L is that both likely resulted from distortion of stanza *Women* below. It stands to reason that the phrase *Laqad faẓẓaltum ʿalā ahl al-wabar* (You have been favored over the Bedouins) was turned into *yā wabar yā wabar* by later narrators.

Nevertheless, all of the Animals stanzas in this section have at least two major features in common. First, their composition is very simple and very similar to certain verses of the Qur'ān, if not an imitation of them. Second, they do not contain any clear religious message.

77 Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 326.

78 *Mufaṣṣal* vol. 7, 296.

79 Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān iʿjāz* 51.

80 See Ibn Manẓūr, "*wabar*" in *Lisān*.

Women

The following Musaylima's stanza features repetitive oaths with women in Yamāma[81] as objects (stanza *Women*):

Wa-l-mubadhdhirāt zarʿa	By the women who scatter seed at planting
Wa-l-ḥāṣidāt ḥaṣda	By the women reaping at harvest
Wa-l-dhāriyāt qamḥa	By the women who winnow wheat
Wa ṭaḥināt ṭaḥna	By the women who grind flour
Wa-l-ḥābizāt khubza	By the women who break bread
Wa-l-thāridāt tharda	By the women who break bread into crumbs
Wa-l-lāqimāt laqma	By the women who gobble mouthfuls
Ihālat wa samna	[They are] grease and fat
Laqad faḍḍaltum ʿalā ahl al-wabar[82]	You have been favored over the Bedouins
Wa mā sabaqakum ahl al-madar[83]	Nor shall the settled people take precedence over you
Rīfukum fa amnaʿūh	Defend your cultivated land
Wa-l-muʿtarr fa āwūh[84]	Shelter the one seeking favor
Wa-l-bāghī[85] *fa nāʾūh*	And oppose the oppressor.[86]

[81] Woman plays a vital role in the story of Musaylima. The name Yamāma stemmed from a girl, who seems to have served as a talented *kāhina* (soothsayer) (see chapter six earlier). It is worth remembering that in explaining the concept of creation, stanzas *Creation* A, B, C and D take *ḥublā* (a pregnant woman) as an illustration, whereas the Qurʾān uses sperm. It is also worth recalling that the prophetess Sajāḥ served as a powerful tribal leader of the Tamīm, whose campaigns to the neighbouring tribes frightened Musaylima. During their negotiation, the Ḥanīfa had to give half of their revenue to the Tamīm.

[82] See also many different meanings of *wabar* in the earlier discussion of stanza *Animals wabar*.

[83] Synonym to *ahl al-madar*, which sometimes refers to those who farmed olives and animals for their milk, is also *ahl al-ḥaḍr* (the settled ones). See Ibn Manẓūr, "*madar*" in *Lisān*.

[84] Al-Maqrīzī presents: *Wa-l-muʿyī fa awwūh*. See his *Imtāʾ al-Asmā* vol. 14, 529.

[85] The word *baghy* often appears in the Qurʾān. We have dealt with this word in the earlier discussion of the word *iḥsān* in the stanza *Tribalism* A.

[86] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 284; trans. Donner, *History* 109-10; Al-Maqrīzī, *Imtāʾ al-asmāʿ* vol. 14, 529; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 361-362; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān* 239; al-Hārūnī, *Ithbāt nubuwwāt* 38. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 326. Ibn Kathīr also relates that Ibn Nawwāḥa, prior to his execution under the order of Ibn Masʿūd, led the remaining followers of Musaylima to recite the above stanza in a mosque (see our earlier discussion in chapter two). See also Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 5, 52.

Interestingly, the above stanza is also attributed to the tribe of ʿAbd al-Dār. See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī Tafsīr al-maʾthūr, mukhtaṣar Tafsīr tarjamān al-qurʾān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1411/1990) vol. 3, 55-56. This, however, lends support to the idea of the existence of the Ur-text upon which the Qurʾān and Musaylima' revelation were based. See also the discussion of the Ur- Qurʾān in chapter ten below n. 2.

Indeed, it is misleading that many modern Muslim writers, who do not carefully analyze this stanza, consider it as useless as stanza *Animals* (frogs). See, for instance, ʿArafa, *Qaḍiyyat al-iʿjāz al-qurʾānī wa atharuhā fī tadwīn al-balāgha al-ʿarabiyya* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1405/1985) 63. In this regard, ʿArafa says that "[stanza *Animals*] frog and *ṭāḥināt* do not succeed at all in challenging the Qurʾān (*fa laysa min al-muʿāriḍā fī qalīl wa lā kathīr*)."

The above rhyme scheme sounds familiar to those who recite the following verses of Meccan revelation: Q. 100: 1-6; Q. 79: 1-5; Q. 77: 1-6; Q. 51: 1-6; Q. 37: 1-4.

The above texts all exhibit the following pattern: repetitive oaths with objects + main idea. In the Qurʾānic verses, the exact same pattern of oaths + objects is seen only in Q. 79: 1-5, whereas the rest of the above verses interchangeably use letter *wa* and *fa* + objects.[87] All in all, beginnings of the above stanzas and of the aforementioned Qur'anic verses display the same rhyme scheme, which serve as a prelude to the main idea. The rhyme scheme changes as soon as the main idea is introduced. The following pattern is used consistently by Musaylima's stanza and the aforementioned Qur'anic verses:

Fig. 9. 3

Texts	Oaths *wa* + objects; or *wa* + objects and *fa* + objects; consider as well the consistent rhyme scheme in the prelude	The abrupt change of the rhyme scheme, proceeding to the main idea
Stanza *Women*	*a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a*	*ar-ar//uh-uh*
Q. 100: 1-6	*a-a-a-a-a*	*ūd.....*
Q. 79: 1-5	*a-a-a-a*	*a....*
Q. 77: 1-6	*a-a-a-a-a-a*	*iʿ....*
Q. 51: 1-6	*a-a-a-a*	*iq...*
Q. 37: 1-4	*a-a-a*	*id...*

Whereas Musaylima's stanza uses women with their acitivites as objects of oaths, the above Qurʾānic verses present rather abstract objects, whose exact meaning is enigmatic. Given this, the readers are always challenged to interpret them. The stanza of Musaylima, on the other hand, portrays real and clear objects—women activities.

The above stanza also describes the activities of the farmers, who are described as being superior to the Bedouoins. Some clues of Musaylima's teachings can perhaps be drawn from the above stanza, in which Musaylima calls upon his people to fight against the oppressors, defend their cultivated lands, and protect the weak—a message in keeping with the previous concept of *jiwār* contained in stanza *Tribalism* A.

What distinguishes these verses of the Qurʾān from Musaylima's stanza is that they do not provide any clear description of the contemporary situation of Muḥammad. Rather, they turn the everyday scenery into abstract

[87] Note that *fa* is not considered to be an oath.

concepts, whose meaning is thus dynamic from one exegete to another. The verses of Musaylima, however, have no reader or interpreter who may discover their meanings.[88]

Teachings

As was presented in chapter eight, Maxime Rodinson, F. E Peters, and M. J. Kister have argued that the teachings of Musaylima can be inferred from early Muslim sources.[89] In line with the views taken by these scholars, the following stanza (*Teachings* **A)** preserves some of Musaylima's important teachings:

Samiʿa Allāh li man samaʿ	God listens to whomever He listens to
Wa aṭmaʿuh bi-l-khayri idh ṭamaʿ	And makes him yearns for good when he yearns
Wa lā zāla amruh fī kull mā sarra nafsuh yajtamiʿ	And His cause is still arranged in everything that delights him
Raʾākum rabbukum faḥayyākum	Your Lord sees you and gives you life
Wa min waḥshat khallākum	And preserves you from loneliness
Wa yawm dīnih anjākum	And saves you and gives you life on the day of His religion
Fa aḥyākum ʿalaynā min ṣalawāt maʿshar abrār	For us some prayers of the company of the pious,
Lā ashqiyāʾa wa lā fajjār	Neither miserable nor licentious
Yaqūmūn al-layl wa yaṣūmūn al-nahār	Staying up at night and fasting by day
Wa lirabbikum al-kubbār	Indeed your Lord is great
Rabb al-ghuyūm wa-l-amṭar	The Lord of the clouds and the rain.[90]

Apparently, the above stanza of Musaylima, whose style does not display any blatant resemblance to certain Qurʾānic verses, is the most perfect and complete at all of those at our disposal. Some words and phrases, however, are still comparable to those of the Qurʾān. For example, the beginning of the above stanza, which reads: *samiʿa Allāh* (God listened), sounds similar to that of Q. 58: 1.

[88] Censorship seems to have played a certain role in suppressing the verses of Musaylima. It is said that Sābigh, who came from Tamīm of Yamāma, was punished by caliph ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb, due to Sābigh's curiosity of the meaning of certain ambiguous verses of the Qurʾān *al-dhāriyāt*. In the words of Leemhuis, "being a Tamīmite he may even have been suspected of still adhering to views of the false prophet of the Ridda. It is in this respect mere coincidence that we find among Musaylima's supposed imitations of the revelation: *wa dhāriyat qamḥ*." See Fred Leemhuis, "Origins of the Tafsīr Tradition" in A. Rippin, ed., *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 17-18.

[89] However, Wellhausen reminds us that: "*Schade, dass wir nicht genauer über Sagah und Musailima unterrichtet sind.*" See J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985) 19.

[90] Al-Ṭabārī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 272; trans. Donner, *History* 93; al-Nuwayri, *Nihāyat al-Arab* vol. 19, 78.

Stanza *Teachings* A uses the pattern of: prelude + main idea + closing. The repetitive praises to God in the beginning (lines 1-6) serve as the prelude. Additionally, they also explain the concept of God. The main idea occurs in lines 7-9, and line 10-11 form its closing. As such, the organizational pattern of the above stanza can be drawn as follows:

Prelude	: Repetitive praises to God
Main idea	: Commands of prayer and fasting
Closing	: Praises to God twice

The prelude and closing of the stanza enables us to illustrate the concept of God as:

The listener	(from *samiʿa*)
The generous	(from *ṭamaʿa*)
The arranger of detailed things	(from *amruh fī kulli shayʾ*)
The watcher	(from *raʾā*)
The life-giver	(from *ḥayyā*)
The salvation-giver	(from *anjā*)
He accompanies humans in loneliness	(from *waḥshāt*)
The intention of humans' prayer	(from *ṣalawāt*)
The great	(from *kubbār*)
The Lord of rain and cloud	(from *Rabb al-ghuyūm wa-l-amṭār*)

One has the clear impression that Musaylima, like Muḥammad, taught his people about God's omnipotence, an idea which leads us to assume that Musaylima also embraced monotheism. This may explain why the people of Yamāma, particularly the tribe Ḥanīfa, easily accepted Islam after their defeat. It seems that Islam did not entirely introduce new concepts to them.

In the above stanza, Musaylima commands his people to fast during the day and to pray to God at night. What remains unclear is how many times he prayed and how he performed these prayers.[91] The following stanza *Teachings* **B** also contains the command of prayers and fasting:

Lammā raʾaytu wujūhahum ḥasunat	When I saw their faces they were comely
Wa abshāruhum ṣaffat	And their complexions were clear
Wa aydīhim ṭafulat	And their hands were soft
Qultu lahum lā al-nisāʾ taʾtūn	I said to them, You shall not come to women
Wa lā al-khamr tashrabūn	Nor drink wine
Wa lakinnakum maʿshar abrār	But you are the company of the pious
Taṣūmūn yawma	Fasting by day
Wa tukallifūn yawma	And costing a day
Fa subḥan Allāh idhā jāʾat al-ḥayāt kayfa taḥyūn	So praise be God! Verily life came to where you live

[91] As was mentioned in chapter eight above, later Muslim narrators claimed that Musaylima taught his people to pray three times a day. Interestingly, Ṭulayḥa is also said to have taught his people to pray without *sujūd* (prostration) and *rukūʿ* (bowing). See al-Rāzī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa* 263.

Wa ilā malak al-asmā' tarqūn	Ascend to the King of Heaven
Fa law annahā ḥubbat khardalah	[Even] if it were only mustard seed
La qāma ʿalayhā shahīd yaʿlam mā fī-l-ṣudūr	A witness would take care of it who would know what is [hidden] in the breasts
Wa la akthar al-nās fīhā al-subūr	But most people in it [will meet] perdition.[92]

The organizational pattern of the above stanza follows: prelude + main idea + closing. The prelude occurs in lines 1-3. There are two main ideas: Musaylima's teachings (lines 4-8) and the greatness of God (lines 9-12). Finally, the stanza closes with the story about man's perdition.

The story in the prelude of the above stanza indicates the way in which Musaylima observed his people and then taught them certain moral lessons. This is also similar to the way that Muḥammad did, as preserved in Q. 70: 1 (somebody asked him about the punishment, the answer then followed) and Q. 80: 1-2 (a blind man came, the moral lesson then followed).

Stanza *Teachings* B, like stanza *Teachings* A, commands fasting. In stanza *Teachings* B, Musaylima also prohibits drinking wine.[93] Relating this to the content of stanza *Oaths* C above, one may conclude that Musaylima must have taught regarding diet extensively. The word *ṣaffa* (pure/clean) in the second line of stanza *Teachings* B also reinforces how Musaylima expresses his basic concept of 'purity' (see also the above discussion on stanza *Oaths* D).

An element of asceticism can also be found in line 4 of stanza *Teachings* A, which reads *Qultu lahum lā al-nisā' ta'tūn*. Musaylima must thus have restricted certain sexual intercourse for his people.[94]

According to Watt, Musaylima's stanza above with the portrayal of God as the king of heaven indicates an element of Christian influence. Note as well that this portrayal somewhat resembles those of Q. 78: 37 and Q. 85: 9.

Al-Thaʿālābī also presents another stanza attributed to Musaylima, whose message commands the people to remember God's benevolence with regard to the beautiful nature and fertile land of Yamāma. Similar commands appear in many verses of the Qur'ān. In addition, Kister acknowledges that the following stanza mentions items—gold, silk, silver, grapes, rams, ewes, pomegranates, basilicum, and wheat—that are typical natural resources of Yamāma. To read stanza *Teachings* **C**:

Adhkurū niʿmat allāhi ʿalaykum	Remember the grace of God

[92] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 272; trans. Donner, *History* 93-4.

[93] This contradicts the assumption held by many Muslim authors; see chapter eight above.

[94] This also contradicts what Ibn Isḥāq and many later Muslim writers have described Musaylima as allowing his people to commit adultery and that he himself also did so. It may well be that Musaylima practiced polygamy, which was practiced prevalently, as reported that that he married at least two women: a Meccan woman, namely Kabsa or Kayisa, and Sajāḥ (see chapters five and six above). Musaylima's negative image must have resulted from either misunderstanding or distortion in part of later narrators.

wa a-shkurūhā	and thank Him
Idh ja'ala lakum al-shams sirāja	As He turns the sun into a shining lamp for you
Wa-l-ghayth thajjāja	And He sends heavy rain
Wa ja'ala lakum kibāsh wa ni'āja	He brings forth the ram and the ewe
Wa fiẓẓat wa zujjāja	Silver and glass
Wa dhahab wa dībāja	Gold and silk clothes
Ma min ni'matih 'alaykum an akhraja lakum min al-arḍ rummāna	And it is from His grace that He brings out from the earth: pomegranates
Wa 'inab wa rīhāna	Grapes and royal basilicum
Wa ḥinṭat wa zu'āna.	Wheat and bitter plants.[95]

The above stanza sounds similar to the Qur'anic verses in many respects. The exact phrase "*ni'mat Allāh*" in the first line of the above stanza occurs in the Qur'ān no less than 22 times, while the longer phrase "*idhkurū ni'mat Allāh*" appears in the Scripture no less than 8 times (2: 231; 3: 103; 5: 7; 5: 11; 16: 114; 33: 9; 35: 3; 43: 13). References to the word "*shukr,*" mentioned in the first line of the stanza, are also abundant in the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, and much later literature. Accordingly, the concept at thanking God for what He grants to man has played a vital role in Islamic teachings.

This stanza, however, differs from the rest of those attributed to Musaylima in that its structure displays a rather reversed organization, with its main idea coming first, followed by praises to God.

Interestingly, al-Jurjānī (d. 471) preserves two lines of another stanza attributed to Musaylima (*Teachings* **D**), which also contains the command of prayers. The stanza sounds similar to Q. 108:

Innā a'ṭaynāka al-jamāhir	Indeed, we have given you resentment
Fa ṣalli li rabbika wa jāhir	Thus pray to your Lord loudly.[96]

Surprisingly, we have three more different versions (stanzas *Teachings* **E**, **F**, and **G**). Stanza *teachings* E reads:

Innā a'ṭaināka al-jawāhir	Indeed, we have granted you wealth
Fa ṣalli li rabbika wa hājir	Thus pray to your Lord and emmigrate
Wa inna mabghatika la fājir.	And, indeed, your wrongdoing is immoral.[97]

The command of migration, which appears in the second line of the stanza—"*wa hājir*" (...and emigrate), sounds peculiar. As was mentioned earlier, Musaylima taught his people to defend their land (stanza *Women*), to love their city and to stay there (stanza *Tribalism* D). No report says that Musaylima and his followers ever moved to somewhere from Yamāma.

95 Tha'ālibī, *Thimār* 147; Modification from trans. Kister, "The Struggle" 41.

96 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-i'jāz*, ed. Muḥammad al-Tūnjī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1415/1995) 290.

97 'Arafa, *Qāḍiyyāt al-i'jāz* 63.

Whereas stanza *Teachings* E prohibits people from 'wrongdoing,' the following stanza *Teachings* F calls upon readers to avoid 'greed':

Innā aʿṭaynāka al-jamāhir	Indeed, we have given you coals
Fa khudh li nafsika wa bādir	Thus take for yourself and do not hesitate
Wa aḥdhur an taḥrus aw takāthur.	And be cautious [not] to be greedy and not to exceed [the bounds].

The following stanza *Teachings* F maintains the command of prayers during the nights, which lends weight to the content of stanzas *Teachings* A and B.

Innā aʿṭaynāka al-kawāthir	Indeed, we have granted you abundant things
Fa ṣalli li rabbika wa bādir	Thus pray to your Lord and do not hesitate
Fi al-layāl wa-l-ghawādir.[98]	During the nights and regularly.

During the Battle of Yamāma

Al-Wāqidī records two stanzas attributed to Musaylima recited during the battle of Yamāma. In stanza *Batlle* **A**, Musaylima curses Khālid b. al-Walīd with *rajaz*-style:

Ana rasūl wa irtaḍānī al-khāliq	I am a messenger with whom the Creator (God) is content
Al-qābid al-bāsid dhāka al-rāziq	The Powerful, the Generous, and the Provider to you
Ya ibn al-Walīd anta ʿindī fāsiq	O son of Walīd you are in my view [a mere] sinner
Wa kāfir birabbih munāfiq	And an infidel and a hypocrite to the Lord.[99]

As was argued earlier, it is hard to attribute the *rajaz*-style to Musaylima. Most of his revelation, like the early Meccan verses of the Qurʾān, employs *sajʿ*-style. The stanza, unlike many early Muslim sources which always maintained the heroic side of Khālid b. al-Walīd, describes the general from the point of view of Musaylima.

The second stanza also uses *rajaz*-style (stanza *Battle* **B**):

Falaw ʿalā-l-ḥaqq ṣabarnā ṣabarnā	In fact we are steadfast and steadfast!
ʿAnāda al-qawm fa kānū mithlanā	The [enemy] people became stubborn like us
Wa kāna fī ḥaqq yajūzu amrunā	Our matter is so far still bearable
Ma falla khalq fi al-anām jamʿanā	Moral character of our team does not weaken.[100]

[98] Sayyid Aḥmad b. Zayni Waḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-islāmiyya baʿda maḍā al-futūḥāt al-nabawiyya* (Cairo: Muʿassasa al-Ḥalibī, 1387/1968) vol. 1, 13-14.

[99] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 129.

[100] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 135.

As stanza *Tribalism* B and C do, Musaylima also raises the spirit of the tribe Ḥanīfa.

Having presented all thirty-three stanzas attributed to Musaylima, in the next chapter we will throw light on the uses of Musaylima's stanzas in early Muslim literature in the shadow of *iʿjāz* doctrine. It will also address the use of reading the stanzas in the effort of viewing early history of Islam with a new perspective.

Chapter Ten

The Uses of the Stanzas

Abraham was not a Jew nor yet Christian;
but he was *ḥanīf* (and Muslim)...(Q. 3: 67)

...dass das Judenchristentum...im Islam sich konserviert hat und in einigen seiner treibenden Impulse bis unsere Tage hineinreicht.
(A. Schlatter)[1]

This chapter further discusses implications of overlaps between the thirty-three stanzas attributed to Musaylima presented in chapter nine and some Meccan verses of the Qurʾān. It also addresses the way in which Muslim scholars have used these stanzas in support to the *iʿjāz* doctrine. This chapter also describes the extent to which early Muslims knew Musaylima's stanzas prior to the formulation of the *iʿjāz* doctrine. In the end, the use of the stanzas to reconstruct the history of early Islam is addressed.

The Stanzas and the Meccan Verses of the Qurʾān

The following questions are worth asking here: Why do the stanzas attributed to Musaylima bear many substantial similarities with many Meccan verses of the Qurʾān? Were these stanzas mere imitation of the Scripture?

The answer can perhaps be yes, but only in certain cases. Stanzas *Animals*—frogs, elephants, and coney—may serve here as illustrations. As was discussed in chapter nine earlier, the texts of these stanzas evolved and

[1] As qouted by Lüling, *Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muḥammad, Eine Kritik am "Christlichen" Abenland* (Erlangen: Verlagsbuchhandlung Hannelore Lüling, 1981) 233.

underwent considerable changes. The differences between the early texts of these stanzas in al-Ṭabarī's *al-Tārīkh* and those in the later *iʿjāz* literature are apparent. Likewise, the texts of stanzas *Creation* A, B, and C display differences. As a rule, the earlier the text, the simpler the stanza.

Many of Musaylima's stanzas—e.g., stanzas *Creation* A and D; *Oaths* A, B, C, and D; *Tribalism* A, C and D; *Women*; *Teachings* A, B, C, and D which contain serious religious teachings—also sound very similar to the Meccan verses of the Qur'ān. This has led many Muslim scholars to the misleading conclusion that Musaylima merely imitated the revelation of Muḥammad.

I would like to argue here that Musaylima and Muḥammad did not simply imitate each other. It is likely that the similarities between the revelations of both prophets are due to the fact that the two were contemporary, who shared more or less the same religious and cultural milieu. Moreover, the relationship between Yamāma and Mecca—in terms of people, economy, and religion —can be shown. Many people from both regions must have been known to each other. Muhammad and other important Meccan figures were known in Yamāma—as were Hawdha, al-Aʿshā, Musaylima, and Thumāma in Mecca. Meccans, such as ʿAmr b. ʿĀṣ, visited Yamāma, and Yamāmites, such as al-Aʿshā, Musaylima, and Thumāma, visited Mecca. The Meccans maintained their relation with Yamāma mostly for the sake of economy (e.g., provision), whereas the Yamāmites maintained ties with Mecca mostly for religious reasons (e.g., visiting the Kaʿba). Unsurprisingly, intermarriage among the Quraysh and the Ḥanīfa (e.g. between Musaylima and Kaysa) also occurred.

Given these facts, it is plausible that the two prophets—Muḥammad and Musaylima—were inspired by certain 'Ur-reading' (Ur-qur'ān),[2] which existed in both Mecca and Yamāma, and upon which the two based their revelations. Imagine that the Ur-reading preceded certain verses of the Qur'ān and Musaylima's stanzas—i.e. *Creation* A and D; *Oaths* A, B, C, and D; *Tribalism* A,

[2] Lüling's theory of the Ur-qur'ān is worth considering here. In view of the history of the text of the Qur'ān, Lüling proposes a challenging theory. He argues that there must have been at least three layers in one third of the text of the Qur'ān. The first layer was the Ur-qur'ān (the oldest material), upon which the revelation of The Prophet had been based. The second layer was a version after the revelation, a stage where The Prophet himself played a significant role in terms of composition and editing. The last one was later contribution from the editors, a period during which the collection of the Qur'ān after the death of The Prophet took place. With regard to the Ur-Qurʿān, Lüling argues that it follows the style and pattern of pre-Islamic poetry, much of which might have originated from pre-Islamic Christian hymns. Lüling compares the features of some early Meccan *sūras* to those of the hymns. See Günter Lüling, *Über den Urkoran, Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion der vorislamisch-christlichen Strophenlieder im Koran* (Erlangen: Verlagsbuchandlung Hannelore Lüling, 2004); trans. as *A Challenge to Islam*. See also *Wiederentdeckung* 119-120. For a review of Lüling's thesis, see, for example, Claude Gilliot and Pierre Larcher, "Language and Style of the Qur'ān" in *EQ*.

Our analysis in chapter nine on the similarities between Musaylima's verses and those of the Qur'ān—in terms of diction, structure, style, and rhyme scheme—seems to lend weight to Lüling's theory about the existence of the Ur-qur'ān, which Muḥammad and Musaylima seem to have shared for their revelations.

C and D; *Women*; *Teachings* A, B, C, and D—which still bear substantial similarities as demonstrated in chapter nine earlier.[3]

Nevertheless, according to many Muslim sources, Musaylima imitated the revelation of Muḥammad via al-Rajjāl, who also served as an informant for Musaylima. This view is, of course, misleading. The stories of al-Rajjāl are worth recalling here (for more on him see chapter seven earlier and eleven below). As the story goes, al-Rajjāl came to Medina, serving as a spy for Musaylima, successfully entering the limited circle of the Prophet's Companions, where he learned Q. 2 (al-Baqara/the cow) and some traditions (*sunan/ḥadīth*). In fact, none of these stanzas above bears any direct similarities to Q. 2. Nor do these stanzas bear any significant resemblance to *sunan* or *ḥadīth*. Instead, all of Musaylima's stanzas sound similar to the early Meccan revelations, which al-Rajjāl is not reported to have known.

From the above story, it may well be argued that supported by his own people in Yamāma, Musaylima's prophethood and revelations were independent from those of Muḥammad. It is conceivable that there were many prophets at that time (e.g. Sajāḥ, Ṭulayḥa and Aswad), with each prophet having his own region. Two of them, Musaylima and Muḥammad were involved in a strong rivalry through correspondence, exchanges of ideas, delegations, and representatives.

The careers of both prophets are also deemed comparable. However, such a comparison can only be made at the early stage of their respective prophethood, a fact which implies that the mixed roles of *kāhin* and prophet are still apparent, as these can be seen in their style of revelation, and in their use of *saj*ʿ. In this way, the prophethoods of Sajāḥ, Ṭulayḥa, and Aswad—who are reported to have uttered *saj*ʿ—seem to have also shared this tendency of being *kāhins*.[4] What distinguishes Musaylima, whose followers were undoubtedly numerous, from the rest of these claimants is that his threat was considered most seriously by the Medinans. In addition, we also have more stanzas attributed to Musaylima than to other 'false' prophets.

Abdullah al-Askar divides Musaylima's career into two stages: as a mere local *kāhin* or a prophet, which occurred very early, and as a political leader, which began after Hawdha's death (see chapter seven and eight above). Apparently, Musaylima had started to deliver his revelations with *saj*ʿ-style very early, which also reflects that of early Meccan verses of the Qurʾān.

The question remains: Why have many Muslim authors dated Musaylima's prophethood to a later period? Why do they have very limited and incomplete verses of Musaylima?

[3] However, this requires more convincing evidence in a future. Equally difficult is to present more evidence in this study to support the attribution of the above stanzas to Musaylima. This, however, does not prevent us from comparing these stanzas with the Meccan verses of the Qurʾān.

[4] For the relationship between *kihāna* and *nubuwwa*, see prologue.

To answer these questions, imagine what knowledge of early Muslims in Mecca and Medina had about Musaylima. It seems that they did not know very much about his revelation, a situation that remained unchanged until in the late Medinan period. They started to realize the threat of Musaylima, once he assumed political leadership in Yamāma following the death of Hawdha. Moreover, the Medinans came to know the verses of Musaylima only after the Battle of Yamāma. The story about what happened between Abū Bakr and the delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa illustrates this point. The caliph was curious about the revelations of Musaylima and therefore asked a member of the delegation to recite them. Apparently, Abū Bakr did not know much about Musaylima's verses. Nor did Khālid b. Wālid, who also asked Mujjāʿa to do the same. It is likely that the rest of the Medinans were also unfamiliar with Musaylima's revelation.

For these reasons, most Muslim narrators presented Musaylima's incomplete verses, as they were not familiar with the complete ones. In addition, they often presented these verses in order to ridicule Musaylima. Along with this, Musaylima's image as an imitator of Muḥammad gained more support, an assumption which has also led many Muslim scholars to conclude that Musaylima's prophetic mission started very late.

Turning to the issue of the same 'diction' which Musaylima and Muḥammad used for their revelation, many early Muslim scholars acknowledged that the Qurʾān also borrowed some words from Yamāma, and particularly from the tribe Ḥanīfa.[5] At first glance, this acknowledgement does not seem significant. However, one may further speculate that its implication is not limited to the borrowing of words, but perhaps also to the 'exchange' of some ideas, which may indicate the existence of 'Ur-qurʾān,' upon which the two prophets based for their revelation.[6] In addition, the 'Ur-qurʾān' must have been preserved mostly in the form of oral traditions.

It is difficult to present more convincing evidence on the attribution of these stanzas to Musaylima. However, it is worth considering that Toshihiko Izutsu, Uri Rubin, and Jawād ʿAlī have also observed pre-Islamic figures and their sayings. Izutsu suggests that some figures were likely historical.[7] With regard to pre-Islamic sayings, Rubin argues that "[a]s a rule, if one does not

[5] Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, "Introduction" in Ismāʿīl b. ʿAmr al-Muqrī, *Kitāb al-lughat fī-l-qurʾān, riwāyat ibn ḥasnūn al-muqrī bi isnādih ilā ibn ʿabbās* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1972/1392) 7. See also the table presented by A. Rippin in his "Ibn Abbās's *al-Lughāt fi al-qurʾān*" in Andrew Rippin, ed. *The Qurʾān: Formative Interpretation* (Ashgate: Voriorum, 1999) 115.

[6] See n. 1 earlier. According to the reports whose authority is extended back to Ibn ʿAbbās, not only does the Qurʾān employs many dialects and words belonging to many Arab tribes, the Scripture also uses foreign languages, such as Aramaic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Persian, Hebrew, Coptic, Greek, and Latin. See also n. 4 above.

[7] Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964) 113 and 117.

suspect the authenticity of the Qur'ān one does not have any immediate reason for rejecting the authenticity of other utterances containing a similar religious or ethical message."[8] As for Musaylima's verses, Jawād ʿAlī writes:

> As regards his [Musaylima's] qur'ān which is said to have challenged the [Muslims'] Qur'ān, it must have been destroyed and then perished; nobody mentions to keep it; or to transmit it [properly]. It is possible that his utterances were not recorded during Musaylima's lifetime. It seems that these were only memorized by his companions and his followers. Some of them then embraced Islam and erased the trace of that qur'ān [from their memory].[9]

As support for the *Iʿjāz* Doctrine

This section will address the issue of how the verses of Musaylima have been employed as examples in the argument for the *iʿjāz* doctrine. Richard C. Martin suggests that the idea of the inimitability of the Qur'ān was already expressed as early as by Abū Hudhayl (d. 227/841-2), whose later student al-Naẓẓām (d. 230/845) formulated the *ṣarfa* (turning away) argument.[10] Al-Naẓẓām's student, al-Jāhiẓ, however, did not accept this. Rather, he argues the inimitability of the Scripture from a linguistic approach, such as by stressing the superiority of the Qur'ān in terms of composition (*ta'līf*) and arrangement of its words (*naẓm*). Issa J. Boullata[11] and Radscheit both give credit to al-Jāhiẓ, a Muʿtazilite writer, for his merit in advancing the *iʿjāz* doctrine. Two centuries prior to al-Jāhiẓ, namely at the time of Ibn Isḥāq, according to Radscheit, the mature articulation of *iʿjāz* doctrine was not yet found. Thus, "*...in dem* [al-Jāhiẓ] *arabische Kultur und islamiche Heilgeschichte zu einer Einheit zusammengezogen sind*."[12]

In line with Radscheit's argument, in dealing with Musaylima's stanza *Creation* A, Ibn Isḥāq did not make any comparison between the stanza and the specific verses of the Qur'ān. Neither did he demonstrate the superiority of the language of the Scripture over that of the stanza. Nor did al-Ṭabarī in presenting other stanzas of Musaylima. It is true that Musaylima is reported to

[8] Rubin, "Hanafiyya and Kaʿba: an Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of *Dīn Ibrāhīm*" in ed. F. E. Peters, *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) 277-278.

[9] Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī tārīkh al-ʿarab qabl al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm al-Malāyīn, 1970) vol. 8, 758.

[10] Richard C. Martin, "Inimitability" in *EQ*. The *ṣarfa* may be defined as follows: "the Arabs were able to utter speech like that of the Qur'ān with respect to linguistic purity and eloquence until The Prophet was sent. When The Prophet was sent, this [characteristics] eloquence was taken away from them and they were deprived of their knowledge of it, and thus they were unable to produce speech like the Qur'ān." See also Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur'ān: *Iʿjāz* and Related Topics," in ed. A. Rippin, *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 141-142.

[11] Issa J. Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation" 141.

[12] Matthias Radscheit, *Die koranische Herausforderung: Die taḥaddī-Verse im Rahmen der Polemikpassagen des Korans* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1996) 103, 2-3.

have failed in working miracles. However, these reports do not provide a specific explanation of the relationship between the verses of Musaylima and the argument of inimitability of the Qur'ān. It is by no means certain here that the doctrine of inimitability was not yet known at the time of al-Ṭabarī. What is clear is that al-Ṭabarī's reports, which likely originated one or two generations earlier, do not contain a sophisticated formulation of the *iʿjāz* doctrine.

Who, then, was the first to use Musaylima's verses as examples to strengthen the argument of the *iʿjāz* doctrine? The sources indicate that it may have been al-Jāḥiẓ as the first scholar who articulated this doctrine from a linguistic point of view, and who employed Musaylima's verses as illustrations to show the superiority of the language of the Qur'ān. Al-Jāḥiẓ, however, neither fully presents nor analyzes Musaylima's verses in detail. Rather, this scholar provides short and general comments on these verses. It is later scholars, e.g. al-Khaṭṭābī, al-Bāqillānī, and al-Hārūnī who provide detailed analyses of Musaylima's stanzas, relating their analyses to the doctrine of inimitability of the Qur'ān seen from the point of view of language.

Indeed, al-Jāḥiẓ commented on Musaylima's lack of talent in composing rhymed-prose. Under the heading which reads "*bāb min asmā' al-kuhhān, wa-l-ḥukkām, wa-l-khuṭabā', wa-l-ʿulamā', min qaḥṭān*" (Chapter on the names of soothsayers, wise-men, orators, scholars, from Qaḥṭān), al-Jāḥiẓ interestingly includes the speaker of Muḥammad, namely Qays b. Shammās and Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās, among notable orators (*khuṭabā'*).[13] As mentioned in chapter five, Thābit performed this duty during the deputation of the tribe of Ḥanīfa to Medina and spoke on behalf of the Prophet to Musaylima. Interestingly, al-Jāḥiẓ also comments on other claimants, such as Al-Aswad *al-kadhdhāb* b. Kaʿb al-Ansī and Ṭulayḥa. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, Ṭulayḥa was a known poet, rhyme-maker, soothsayer, and foreteller, whereas Musaylima, al-Jāḥiẓ asserts, possessed none of these qualities (*kāna baʿīd min dhālika kullih*).[14]

The above comments by al-Jāḥiẓ are not surprising, as Musaylima's image had previously deteriorated; he had earned many negative titles by the time of al-Jāḥiẓ (see chapter eight above). What is remarkable here is that al-Jāḥiẓ stresses the new face of Musaylima along with a more mature *iʿjāz* doctrine. Thus, Musaylima's label as an imitator of the Qur'ān gained more support. It is worth noting that this epithet had not yet emerged at the time of Ibn Isḥāq, who only mentioned that Musaylima proclaimed prophethood and then composed *sajʿ*. Neither did al-Ṭabarī point out specifically that Musaylima's verses were imitations of those of the Scripture. Given this fact, we can conclude that this new face was introduced as early as the time of al-Jāḥiẓ, if not by al-Jāḥiẓ himself. In the words of al-Jāḥiẓ:

13 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ed. ʿAlī Abū Mulḥim (Beirut: Dār Maktaba al-Hilāl, 1407/1988) vol. 1, 341.

14 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān* vol. 1, 342.

As you know, the followers of Musaylima and those of Ibn Nawwāḥa, indeed, still relate what Musaylima composed. Every one, however, knows [the truth], upon listening to what Musaylima [had composed to] challenge the Qur'ān. [Yet it is clear that] he [Musaylima] snatched some, took some, and made efforts [in his works] to be comparable to it. Indeed, God had determined that common man cannot perform this, even if numerous men join together.[15]

It is apparent that al-Jāhiẓ still heard the stanzas from the former followers of Musaylima. What is unclear is whether the stanzas that al-Jāhiẓ listened to are the same as those in al-Ṭabarī's *al-Tārīkh*, on which al-Bāqillānī, al-Khaṭṭābī (319/931-388/998), and al-Hārūnī based their presentation. Before al-Jāhiẓ wrote the story about Musaylima in his *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, under the heading "*Musaylima al-kadhdhāb*," al-Jāhiẓ went to a group of the tribe Ḥanīfa that lived in the vicinity of Baṣra, whose story he then listened to. It is also worth recalling here that Ibn Isḥāq consulted a Shaykh from the tribe Ḥanīfa on the story of deputation (see chapter five). In this vein, both al-Jāhiẓ and Ibn Isḥāq shared the same method, i.e, meeting with and listening to the people of Musaylima to get information from them. Thus, both scholars still attempted to record the voices of these people. Al-Bukhārī (see also chapter five above), on the other hand, simply ignored these voices and relied on those of the Medinans in telling the story of Musaylima.

Al-Khaṭṭābī relates Musaylima's stanzas to the failure of *muʿāriḍa* (an attempt at meeting the challenge of the miracle of the Qur'ān), a technical term that later scholars of *iʿjāz* used. Al-Khaṭṭābī comments on stanzas *Animals* C (frog) and H (elephant) and *Creation* B as follows:

As for the sayings of Musaylima on frog, it is clear that they are entirely worthless. Their sentences are not right, their meanings are not sound. None of the three characteristics of *balāgha* can be found.[16] In fact, these confusing sentences are forced to follow the rhyme (*sajʿ*), whose maker usually neglects the meaning to stress the rhyme, instead of the content. If the rhyme is fixed, [he then goes on] uninterrupted."[17]

In addition, al-Khaṭṭābī highlights the words of ʿAmr b. ʿĀs upon listening to Musaylima's stanzas: "Indeed, by God, all of us know that you are really one of the arch-liars."[18] In a similar vein, al-Bāqillānī warns his reader as follows:

With regards to the words of Musaylima—the arch-liar—and to what he assumed to be the qur'ān, it is worthless to deal with it [Musaylima's qur'ān], and foolish to think of it. We will present it here in order to attract the reader's

[15] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1408/1988) vol. 4, 89.

[16] The three characters are: 1. words conveying meaning; 2. ideas subsisting in words; and 3. structure organizing both. See Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation" 144.

[17] Al-Khaṭṭābī, *Bayān iʿjāz al-qur'ān* in *thalāth rasā'il fī iʿjāz al-qur'ān li rummānī wa-l-khaṭṭābī wa ʿabd al-qāhir al-jurjānī*, ed. Muḥammad Khalāf Allāh and Muḥammad Zaghlūl Salām (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) 51.

[18] Al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz al-qur'ān*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Saqr (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) 52.

> attention, to bear witness [to it]. Indeed, its [that qur'ān's] idiocy misleads, its feebleness errs, and [it is] a field of extensive ignorance! Whoever sees what we will present [below] will understand the stance of its [that qur'ān's] ignorance. It is [quite] appropriate to [immediately] praise God for his understanding and for the knowledge that God gives him.[19]

It seems that al-Bāqillānī believes in both the low quality of the stanzas and the foolishness of their composer, Musaylima who, according to al-Bāqillānī, did not realize that his works have led to nowhere but his own scorn and insult.[20]

In the hands of both al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Bāqillānī Musaylima's stanzas become examples to support the argument of the *iʿjāz* doctrine. That is, to show the inferiority of man's works, on the one hand, and to show the superiority of the Qur'ān, on the other. However, al-Khaṭṭābī and others fail to analyze those stanzas, which contain religious messages, such as stanzas *Teachings*, *Women*, and *Tribalism*. Instead, they perceived Musaylima negatively, an attitude which made it impossible for them to find positive aspects of his writings.

This negative image endured down to the twentieth century *iʿjāz* literature, and in some cases deteriorated even further. Muṣṭafā al-Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī, for example, presents the challengers of the Qur'ān as follows: Musaylima, Abhalla b. Aswad or al-Aswad al-Ansī, Ṭulayḥa b. Khuwaylid al-Asadī, Sajāḥ bt. al-Ḥārith b. Suwayd al-Tamīmiya, al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, Ibn Muqaffa', Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥy or Ibn al-Rawandī, Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d. 354 H), and Abū al-Aʿlā al-Maʿārī (d. 449 H).[21] Musaylima is thus perceived here as the first imitator of the Qur'ān.

Nonetheless, Musaylima's stanzas represent only a few of the examples used to support the *iʿjāz* argument,[22] an issue with which we will deal later, after learning the story of Musaylima's stanzas prior to the *iʿjāz* doctrine.

[19] Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān iʿjāz* 238.

[20] Al-Bāqillānī, *Bayān iʿjāz* 375.

[21] Mustafa Ṣādiq al-Rafi'ī, *Iʿjāz al-qur'ān wa-l-balāgha al-nabawiyya* (Cairo: al-Muqtataf, 1346/1928) 228-246. Interestingly enough, Muḥammad Hītū fails to mention Musaylima in his list: al-Walīd b. al-Mughīra, ʿUtba b. Rabīʿa, and al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith. See his *al-Muʿjizāt al-qur'āniyya* 36-39.

[22] The following *iʿjāz* works do not pay serious attention to Musaylima: Awad Muawed al-Jemaey, "al-Rummani's *al-Nukāt fī Iʿjāz al-qur'ān*" Ph.d dissertation 1987; Peter Antes, *Prophetenwunder in der Ašʿariya bis al-Ġazālī (Algazel)* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1970); Yusuf Rahman, "The Miracolous Nature of Muslim Scripture: A Study of ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Iʿjāz al-qur'ān*," M. A. Thesis McGill University 1995.

Prior to I'jāz Doctrine

It is true that the main principles on which the doctrine of *iʿjāz* must have been based are found in the Qurʾān.[23] Thus, the idea of the inimitability of this Scripture must have existed since the time of Muḥammad, an idea which also reflects what happened between the Prophet and his audiences. As the story goes, upon hearing his revelation, some believed in the truth that he brought, whereas others—including *mushriks* (polytheists), *kāfirs* (unbelievers), and *munāfiqs* (hypocrites)—did not. Still, there were people of the books—*Naṣārā* (Christians) and *Yahūd* (Jews)[24]—whom the Qurʾān describes as being the people of the previous prophets but as having no willingness to accept Muḥammad's prophethood.

Those who refused the truth of the Qurʾān challenged it, with oppositions occurring in the very early Meccan period. This can be seen by the fact that most of the *taḥaddī* (challenging) verses were revealed in Mecca (10: 37-39; 11: 13; 17: 88; 28: 49-51 and 52: 33-34), whereas only one *taḥaddī* verse was revealed in Medina (2: 23-34).[25] Inferring from this story, most of the challengers of the Qurʾān must have been Meccans, who did so during this early period. In Medina the number of challengers must have decreased, especially during the last years of the Prophet's lifetime, after the conquest of Mecca (*fatḥ al-Makka*/8 H.), when no one dared to display a blatantly hostile attitude to Islam.[26] In fact, some vehement opponents of the Prophet from other schools of Ḥanīf, e.g., Abū ʿĀmir and Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, escaped from Ḥijāz after the conquest. At the same time, Medina grew stronger than ever without any serious internal rivals. However, the next threat came from someone outside Ḥijāz, i.e., Musaylima.

The first question that arises is whether Musaylima was among those to whom the *taḥaddī* verses were addressed. The answer is no. The challengers of the Qurʾan, for whom these verses were originally intended, were mostly Meccans and a few Medinans. Musaylima, who lived in Yamāma which was not considered to be an immediate threat to Islam, was not included.

Once again, Musaylima's serious threat to Islam occurred only in the late Medinan period. During the early Meccan and Medinan period, the Prophet must have devoted most of his attention to local opponents, the Meccans.

[23] See Boullata, "The Rhetorical Interpretation" 140; Martin, "Inimitability" *EQ*; von Grunebaum, "Iʿjāz" in *EI²*.

[24] For discussion on the meanings of each group, see Radscheit, *Die koranische* 15-23. Ref. cited. See also each entry of the words in *EI²* and *EQ*.

[25] Shahid, "Another Contribution" 8.

[26] For the basic story of the conquest of Mecca, see Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalbī (Cairo: Shirka wa Maṭbaʿa al-Bābī Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955) vol. 2, 389-428; trans. Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad, a Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996) 540-561.

It is important to note that although Musaylima declared prophethood very early in his village of Haddar, he had limited political power. Having seized leadership after Hawdha's death (630/8 H.)—which coincided with the conquest of Mecca—Musaylima's political power in Yamāma grew. So did his threat to Medina. Still, Medina must have been more powerful than Yamāma. The number of followers of Muḥammad—who came from Mecca, Medina and their neighboring areas—grew, whereas Musaylima, whose followers were limited only to their region, must have still been busy consolidating his political power in his hometown. Thus, Islam spread very quickly beyond Mecca and Medina during the period in which Musaylima's political power was just emerging. His prophethood remained a local phenomenon in Yamāma, whereas Muḥammad's already claimed to be universal, attested by the fact that many Arab tribes had started to convert to Islam. By year 630 Musaylima was still in the consolidation stage, while Muḥammad in one of expansion.

As indicated in chapter eight earlier, according to al-Thaʿālabī, the Medinans started to realize the threat posed by Musaylima in the late Medinan period, during which the Prophet himself dealt with this issue in one of his speeches. As argued earlier, the Medinan Muslims, who did not pay serious attention to the detailed and rapid development of Yamāma movement, were unfamiliar with the exact verses of Musaylima. By contrast, Musaylima and his companions observed Medinan politics, as al-Rajjāl was sent to this city. In fact, a few people from Yamāma, such as Thumāma and his followers, started to convert to Islam. It is worth recalling that Musaylima's visit to Medina, together with the deputation of his tribe, must have served as a test case to measure the political power of Medina and to negotiate with Muḥammad, if possible.

All in all, most of the Muslims in Medina were never seriously acquainted with Musaylima's religious mission, teachings, and verses—a situation that remained unchanged until after the Battle of Yamāma, and was only modified at the later time of ʿUthmān. As explained in chapter two earlier, Ibn Masʿūd was surprised upon hearing that the Ḥanīfa recited another "qurʾān" in addition to the standard Qurʾān, which Muslims believed in. This indicates that Ibn Masʿūd was not familiar with the verses of Musaylima, and neither were other Companions at that time. Nonetheless, Musaylima must have revealed more verses than are currently at our disposal. According to one report, his revelation was also called the qurʾān and according to another, it was in the form of *muṣḥaf*, regardless whether the Companions and early Muslims in general realized it.[27] In addition, following Jawād ʿAlī, the tribe of Ḥanīfa, and the followers of Musaylima, did not retain these verses in their memories, especially after they converted to Islam. Otherwise, caliphs must have cen-

[27] It is true that there is no guarantee that Ibn Masʿūd may truly be surprised. It could be that this story was a mere addition of later transmitters. However, it still implies that Muslims were not familiar with Musaylima's verses at that time.

sored them, such as in the case of Sābigh by ʿUmar (see chapter nine n. 88). Or else, their fellow Muslims ridiculed them, when they recited these verses.

If later Muslim scholars, whose predecessors appeared to have ignored these verses, wanted to know more about Musaylima's verses, they had to consult the people of Yamāma. This must have been one of the reasons why Musaylima's verses were not treated seriously. Ibn Isḥāq, for example, only cited three lines in his *Sīra*. Al-Wāqidī reported a few more stanzas while telling the story of the Yamāma Battle. It may well be that al-Wāqidī relied on the people of Yamāma for his transmission. It is also worth recalling that al-Ṭabarī's chain of transmissions in reporting the Battle of Yamāma end with the people of Yamāma. Finally, al-Jāḥiẓ appears to be the last Muslim scholar who heard these verses from the mouths of the people of Ḥanīfa. Al-Jurjānī, on the other hand, does not declare his sources clearly for the two lines of Musaylima's stanza (see stanza *Teachings* D in chapter nine above). What is clear is that later Muslim scholars—such as al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Bāqillānī who took for granted the previous reports about these verses without any critical analysis—did not attempt to present the sound verses of Musaylima. Surprisingly enough, al-Thaʿālābī presents some additional verses attributed to Musaylima (see stanzas *Creation* D, *Teachings* C, and *Tribalism* C in chapter nine above).

As was argued earlier, Musaylima's verses gained more attention from later Muslim scholars due to their use as examples in the matured *iʿjāz* doctrine. Imagine what had happened with these verses prior to that point. It appears that Musaylima's verses existed independently from that of crude *iʿjāz* argument; nor is there any relationship between the two, which did indeed occur in the hands of al-Jāḥiẓ.

As noted previously, the use of Musaylima's stanzas has no central role in the *iʿjāz* argument. Guess what factors might have led to this situation. To begin with, numerous loyal followers of Musaylima had been killed in the Battle of Yamāma. Those who survived were summoned to convert to Islam, or be executed. At the time of al-Jāḥiẓ, the image of the 'defeated' Musaylima and his followers was already prevalently held. The deteriorating image of his 'weak' verses, which apparently have no defender, was not sufficient to support the *iʿjāz* doctrine. Hence, the use of these verses gained little 'validity.'

In addition, as new converted Muslims came not only from Medina and Mecca, but also from more multi-ethnic cities, such as Damascus, Baghdad, Kūfa, Baṣra, etc.,[28] the audience of the Qurʾān continued to grow. Thus, local stories with local contexts, such as that of Musaylima, sound less convincing as arguments to support the 'superiority' of the Qurʾān for a broader audience. It is therefore not surprising that Muslim scholars paid attention more

[28] For the discussion on the spread of The Prophet's Companions in many regions, see Fuad Jabali, *The Companions of The Prophet: a Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

to linguistic and literary approaches than to these local Arab stories to explain the *iʿjāz* doctrine. On the one hand, merely presenting the *taḥaddī* verses was not sufficient to prove the superiority of the Qurʾān, showing the weaknesses of verses attributed to Musaylima, on the other hand, gains little 'validity.' Yet the Qurʾān had to be interpreted in a more sophisticated manner for the wider audience, the science of language thus became an increasingly important tool for doing so, which played a more central role later.

A Qurʾān without Readers

Our analysis in chapter nine and ten enables us to reclaim the legacy that Musaylima left behind, namely his qurʾān. First, imagine the religious situation of the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Musaylima's propethic claim. There must have been several attempts at reconciling some elements of Judaism, Christianity, and many local Arab traditions which diverged from Hellenistic Christian traditions in the late of Byzantium.[29] Muḥammad and Musaylima, whose prophethoods were a part of these traditions, must be regarded as those who actively participated in these *'hermeneutical'* endeavors. Whereas Muḥammad reconciled many elements of Judaism and Christianity with local Meccan and Medinan traditions, Musaylima did so with those of Yamāma. Once again, these endeavors were not uncommon among many Arab figures: Khālid b. Sīnān, Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān, Riʿāb b. Shannā, Asʿad Abū Karb al-Ḥamīrī, Quṣṣ b. Sāʿida, Zayd b. ʿAmr b. Nufayl, Abū Qays, Waraqa, ʿAdās, Baḥīra, ʿAbdalla b. Jahsh al-Asadī (for their stories, see our prologue above), Umayya b. Abi Ṣalṭ, Zayd ʿAmr b. Nufayl, Abū ʿĀmir, Ṭulayḥa, Aswad, and Sajāḥ (see chapter eight earlier)—most of whom attempted to interpret "Abrahamic Ḥanīf traditions" in accordance with local contexts.

To highlight the prophetic missions shared by Muḥammad and Musaylima, the two served as tribal leaders, revealed divine messages, and attracted numerous followers. Each revealed his own version of the 'qurʾān' (reading),

[29] See Günter Lüling, *Wiederendeckung* 221, 250-251. According to Lüling, the debates between Muḥammad and his Meccan opponents can perhaps be simplified as "*Abarahamitisch-urchristlich-judenchristlicher Islam im Verein mit dem ismaelitisch-altarabischen anikonischen Heidentum*" versus "*Das hellenistische Christentum Zentralarabiens.*" On another occasion Lüling describes the debates as those between "*Das hellenistische gȍtzendienerische/bilderverehrende*" versus "*Polytheistische/trinitarische Christentum Zentralarabiens.*" Muḥammad, according to this theory, stood for a local pagan interpretation of Judaism and Christianity, whereas his opponents were simply closer to Hellenistic Christianity. In view of this, it is true that some elements of Christianity can be found in the figures of Umayya b. Abi Salṭ, Zayd b. Nufayl, Warāqa, Baḥīra, and al-Aʿshā. However, it is hard to provide convincing evidences that they held Hellenistic Christian views. Additionally, some of Muḥammad's vehement opponents were simply pagans, such as Abū Lahab or Abū Jahal. For more on Lüling's theory, see his *Der Christliche Kult an der Vorislamischen Kaaba als Problem der Islamwissenschaft und Christlichen Theolgie* (Erlangen: Verlagbuchhandlung H. Lüling, 1977) 10: "Das Faktum des christlichen Kults und der vorslamischen Kaaba soll dargelegt werden und damit das Faktum, dass des Propheten mekkanische Gegner Christen waren. "

which often share common expressions, and whose content and style are often also similar in terms of rhyme scheme (*sajʿ*), organizational pattern, and diction. Both prophets taught their people about God, the concepts of creation, human destiny, purity, the spirit of tribalism, and the role of angel in revelation; the two prescribed prayers, fasting, and dietary rules; and they prohibited wine drinking and adultery.

This study leads us to conclude that there was more than one 'qurʾān' during Muḥammad's lifetime, although it is hard to pinpoint exactly when his specific Qurʾān prevailed in the Arabian peninsula and when the other versions disappeared. There was more than one prophet, who were later defeated and whose 'qurʾāns' must have been erased from the memories of their 'former' followers. This study reveals that those who defended their prophethood and their qurʾāns, such as Musaylima, had to sacrifice their lives and mission.

Other possible comparisons between Muḥammad and Musaylima include: the way in which Musaylima dealt with his people (*umma*);[30] his reconciling some elements of Judaism and Christianity with those of local Yamāma; and the fact that his message was similar to early Meccan Islam. It is hard, however, to find its similarities with Medinan Islam, as the Muslim community during this period was already established. Interestingly, the latest development of Musaylima's cult can be compared with the later Islamization of Mecca after the conquest. Musaylima's assumption of power in Yamāma coincided with the conquest of Mecca. Both Musaylima's cult in Yamāma and Islam in Mecca consolidated and grew very quickly.

One may wonder what legacy Musaylima left behind. As argued earlier, Musaylima's cult and Islam were siblings. Although his cult perished, many of his teachings endured and survived in Islam. Whereas Islam has contributed a great deal to mankind and has added legitimacy in establishing many nations and states, Musaylima's contribution remains unclear. On the one hand, the Qurʾān has become inspiration for the works of numerous readers—ranging from philologists, rhetoricians, linguists, poets, jurists, theologians, historians, to many other Muslim scholars, who have always deem the Qurʾān in the highest regard. Yet many generations have paid detailed attention to each word of the Scripture, which has been interpreted in countless tunes. On the other hand, Musaylima's qurʾān has no readers who are willing to explore its meaning. Instead, the few verses that reach us have been 'censored, misinterpreted, distorted, and ignored.' This situation is what essentially led to the destruction of any legacy Musaylima might have left us. As we have demonstrated, the story of Musaylima can provide a different perspective on the portrayals of early Islam. Despite the fact that very few of his verses reached us, we should consider Musaylima's qurʾān as an attempt to appreciate the previous religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and local Arab Paganism.

[30] See the story of the Usayyids in chapter nine earlier.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE DECISIVE BATTLE IN ʿAQRABA

If the army had been destroyed, they would all have
gone down in history as failures
(Carl von Clausewitz).[1]

In the final battle which took place at the field of ʿAqraba, the Muslim forces under the command of Khālid b. Walīd defeated Musaylima, whose prophetic mission then ended. Our discussion will begin with the objection raised by many modern scholars to the term "Apostasy War," employed by conventional Muslim sources. The next section will devote a great deal of attention to reading and analyzing the accounts of the battle provided by early Muslim sources. This chapter will also shed new light on the account of the first effort to collect the materials of the Qurʾān under the reign of Abū Bakr after the War, in which we will relate the story of the rivalry between Muḥammad's Qurʾān and Musaylima's 'qurʾān' (reading) in the battle.

Clarifying the Term 'Apostasy Movement'

The so-called the 'War of Apostasy' (*ḥurūb al-ridda*), according to the traditional Muslim accounts, covers many battles between Muslim forces and those who rebelled against Medina under the caliphate of Abū Bakr. These insurgents—led by the four known false prophets: al-Aswad al-Ansī in Yemen, Musaylima in Yamāma, Ṭulayḥa b. Khuwaylid of the tribes of Asad and Ghaṭafān, and Sajāh of the tribe Tamīm—have usually been branded

[1] As quoted by Micheal I. Handel, *Masters of War, Classical Strategic Thought* (London: Frank Cass, 1996) 41.

apostates by Islam. The vast majority of early and later Muslim sources assert that these revolts against Medina were primarily reactions to the Prophet Muḥammad's death.[2] In addition to the people of the four claimants above, traditional Muslim accounts also cover the apostasy of the tribes Hawāzin, Sulaym, and ʿĀmir. Moreover, the political expansions of Medina to the wider Arabian peninsula—e.g., to Uman, Baḥrayn, Kinda, and Hadramawt—are also included in the story of *Ridda*.[3]

However, many later scholars have contested the term "Apostasy War," commonly used by Muslim literature. The main reason is that many of these tribes did not apostatize from Islam, as they had never embraced it in the first place.[4] It is difficult to single out a general cause among all the uprisings against Medina after the death of the Prophet. Hallaq, therefore, is right in stating that "....each of the revolts against the new order [Medina] had its own causes."[5] What is clear is that the story of the 'War of Apostasy,' as far as early Muslim literature is concerned, covers many battles that took place under the caliphate of Abū Bakr and only those within the boundaries of the Arabian peninsula. According to the portrayal provided by *tārīkh* literature, the Battle of Yamāma was the fiercest of all in the Apostasy War. However, some scholars have also questioned the status of "apostasy" of the tribe Ḥanīfa. As argued elsewhere in this study, the vast majority of these people remained firm in their own faith in the cult of Musaylima.

Once again, the battle of Yamāma did not refer to the war waged by Muslim force against those who apostatized from Islam.[6] Instead, it referred to the

2 Al-Yaʿqūbī, for instance, writes that "...a group of Arabs (*jamāʿa*) laid claim of prophethood, whereas another group apostatized, put crowns in their heads, and withheld taxes (*zakāt*) from Abū Bakr." See al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: al-Haydariyya, 1384/1964) vol. 2, 107.

3 See, for instance, the headings provided by Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 249-330; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda, Iqtabasa min al-iktifāʾ li-l-kalāʿī al-balansī*, ed. Khurshīd Aḥmad Fāriq (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1970); al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda, Riwāya aḥmad b. muḥammad b. aʿtham al-kūfī* (d. 314), ed. Yaḥyā al-Juburī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990/1410); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1385/1965) vol. 2, 342-378.

4 M. Lecker, "al-Ridda" in Supp. *EI*². Shoufani provides a summary of the views subscribed by Western scholars who challenged the traditional Muslim sources. According to Shoufani, Ridda War does not refer to war against apostasy movement, but rather refers to the political expansion of Medina. See Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973) 71-76; Fred McGraw Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981) 85; M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132), A New Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 20.

5 See his "Apostasy" in *EQ*.

6 According to Shoufani, the term "Ridda" is only appropriate when it refers to the tribes Ghaṭafān, Ṭayyi and Tamīm, because they were "backsliders" who withheld taxes from Medina. Later Muslim sources, however, broadened the term and applied it to the rest of Arab tribes whom the Muslims fought, including the tribe Ḥanīfa. Interestingly, later Muslim jurists related the meaning of *Ridda* more clearly to the issue of *shahāda* (testimony), *ṣalāt* (pray), and *zakāt* (almsgiving). See Shoufani, *al-Riddah* 105. However, Wael Hallaq is right in

then ongoing rivalry between the cult of Musaylima in Yamāma and Islam in Medina. In addition, the Medinans sought to bring Yamāma under their subjugation, whereas the inhabitants of Yamāma refused this by defending their land. It should also be borne in mind that the antagonism between the 'two prophets' had started during the lifetime of Muḥammad, and Abū Bakr merely inherited this stance. In fact, the Prophet himself had never succeeded in annihilating the other prophet in Yamāma; it was Abū Bakr who performed this task. Thus, Musaylima's movement was not merely a reaction to the death of the Prophet; instead, this movement in Yamāma was perhaps as old as Islam itself. In short, the Battle of Yamāma can be described as the battle between the followers of the two prophets.

The discussion to follow will be concerned with the battle of Yamāma, leaving aside the general issue of the 'Apostasy War.' It will begin with the way in which early Muslim scholars portrayed this battle.

Various Early Accounts of the March to Yamāma

Although many later Muslim and Western scholars have already attempted to reconstruct the story of this battle, they have essentially based their accounts on early Muslim sources.[7] Most of the later accounts do not adequately elaborate their sources, i.e., they do not explicitly state which sources have served as their basis, nor what differences exist among these sources. Therefore, we will provide a close reading of these sources in order to highlight the differences among them.

Al-Wāqidī

The supposed oldest work that we have at our disposal is that of al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822), which deserves our close attention for its long and well-organized narration. However, he does not declare his sources. Two main features characterize al-Wāqidī's accounts of the battle: his citation of many letters written by several important figures involved in the Battle, and his citation of poems attributed to many warriors. For the sake of clarity, let us present the summary as follows:

writing that "The Banu Hanifa, led by Musaylima in Yamama, had never been subject to Medinan domination nor did they sign any treaty either with Muḥammad or with his successor Abū Bakr....they never converted to Islam in the first place so that they cannot correctly be labeled as apostates." See his "Apostasy" in *EQ*. For more discussion on the matter of apostasy by later Muslim jurists, see, for instance, W. Haffening, "Murtadd" in *EI*².

7 See, for instance, Muḥammad Izhar ul-Haq, *Poetry of the Ridda Wars: Its Literary, Political and Religious Aspects*, Ph.D Dissertation Indiana University, 1998; Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, *Ayyām al-ʿarab fī al-islām* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1393/1973) 167-175.

Having completed his mission in al-Buṭāḥ and killed Mālik b. Nuwayra, Khālid b. al-Walīd directed his troops to the tribe Ḥanīfa in Yamāma.[8] This decision, based upon the order of Abū Bakr, was put in a letter.[9] It is Muḥkam b. Ṭufayl who incited the people of Yamāma to face Khālid's force.[10] Thumāma b. ʿUthāl, on the other hand, urged his people to fight on the side of Medina.[11] Having joined Khālid's force, Thumāma sent a letter to Musaylima containing a challenging poem to the latter.[12] On the road to Yamāma, Khālid's force met Mujjāʿa accompanied by twenty-three men.[13] When asked about Musaylima, these men answered that he was 'a partner in prophethood with Muḥammad.' All of them were then beheaded. Only Mujjāʿa was spared, mainly by Sāriya b. ʿĀmir's pleas for him. Their detailed conversation and poems are also presented.[14]

Al-Wāqidī continues his portrayal of the battle, and its summary runs as follows: Khālid's troops—the left side led by Zayd b. Khaṭṭāb, the right by ʿUsāma b. Zayd, another wing by al-Barrāʾ b. Mālik—reached a place called ʿAqraba where they faced Musaylima's troops.[15] Not only was each side was eager to kill the other, but each also challenged the enemy with poems—those of ʿAmmār b. Yāsir, al-Ḥārith b. Hishām, and ʿĀmir b. Kathīr are presented. By late afternoon, five men and several horses were killed.[16] The fierce battle continued; three hundred Muslims were killed, and even more of Musaylima's troops were killed. The next day, Muḥkam b. Ṭufayl raised the spirit of his troops.[17] Thābit b. Qays al-Anṣāri was wounded, but he still raised the spirit of Muslim troops. Thābit was then killed, and so was Sāʾib b. al-ʿAwwām.[18] Al-Barrāʾ b. Mālik, a prominent Muslim warrior—riding a horse and reciting a poem challenging the enemy—fought bravely like a lion.[19] On the other side, Musaylima delivered a speech addressing his people in which he cursed Khālid

[8] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda*, 108.

[9] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda*, 112-113. The letter contains detailed instructions and features a systematic order: introduction, content, and closing. It seems likely that al-Wāqidī only uses the letter for the purpose of his own narrative, and its authenticity is far from certain.

[10] Al-Wāqidī also presents poems composed by Muḥkam attacking Khālid, see Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 115. Interestingly, Hassān b. Thābit responded to Muḥkam's poem by reciting another poem, see Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Ridda*, 116.

[11] Besides delivering speech in front of his people, Thumāma also cites Q. 40: 1-3.

[12] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Ridda* 118.

[13] Al-Wāqidī also reports that Mujjāʿa cites Q. 6: 164 and composes a poem during his conversation with Khālid.

[14] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 120-121.

[15] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 122-123.

[16] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 125.

[17] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 126-127.

[18] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 127-128. On Sāʾib; see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 3, 25.

[19] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 128.

in a poem. Abū Dujāna Sammāk b. Kharsha al-Anṣārī fought bravely and killed many enemies.[20] Bashīr b. ʿAbdalla from the tribe al-Ḥārith b. al-Najjār also fought fearlessly while reciting a poem until he was killed.[21] Musaylima and his army, on the other hand, took refuge in the walled garden. It was Abū Dujāna who heroically entered the garden.[22] This led to another fierce combat inside the garden. Musaylima raised the spirit of his people with his speech and poem.[23] The land of the garden became red due to the blood spilled by both sides.[24] Finally, Waḥshī threw his weapon to Musaylima, who then fell from his horse to the ground and died. Upon hearing that, a man from Anṣār composed an elegy claiming that the Muslim forces finally attained victory.[25]

As was seen, the way in which al-Wāqidī tells the story of the battle can be said to be theatrical. He presents many detailed conversations between the two hostile sides. In addition, many warriors also recited poems that challenged their enemies and raised the spirit of their companions. One can perhaps enjoy this charming style of storytelling, but it is difficult to determine the authenticity of many speeches, letters, and poems.[26] Interestingly, al-Wāqidī tells us the number of Muslim casualties from the battle: 1200 deaths, including 700 readers of the Qurʾān.[27]

Returning to the story of the battle by al-Wāqidī, having narrated the death of Musaylima, he goes on to depict the treaty proposed by Mujjāʿa and signed by Khālid. This treaty was aimed to reconcile the Muslims and the people of Ḥanīfa. The summary runs as follows:

20 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 129-130. On Abu Dujāna; see al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba* vol. 7, 119.

21 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 131-132.

22 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 133.

23 See his poem presented in chapter nine above.

24 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 135.

25 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 137.

26 Al-Wāqidī can perhaps be said here to have poeticized the battle of Yamāma. In this regard, comparison can be made between his role and that of Homer in his *Iliad*. Carol G. Thomas and Craig Conant, in this vein, write that "[t]he poet is neither a historian nor a journalist, although poets in nonliterate societies do assume some of the functions of both. Rather, Homer, who was telling a tale already old at the time of the telling, was recounting a story that he and his audience assumed to be true." See their *The Trojan War* (London: Greenwood Press, 2005) 40. Certainly, the battle of Yamāma occurred at a much later date than the Trojan War, notwithstanding the absence of archeological evidence.

In addition, another comparison can also be made between al-Wāqidī's role and that of Shakespeare in composing *Julius Caesar*. What concerned both narrators was not only 'telling' history but "reshaping" it. It has less to do with whether the stories true or not, but more with the function of the story as a medium of communication between the narrators and the audience. For more analysis of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, see, for instance, Vivian Thomas, "Shakespeare's Sources: Translations, Transformations, and Intertextuality in Julius Caesar" in Horst Zander, ed., *Julius Caesar, New Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2005): 91-110.

27 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 140.

Having found the corpse of Musaylima, Mujjāʿa negotiated agreements with Khālid.[28] In negotiating the treaty between the two parties, Mujjāʿa dressed up women in armor and weapons and ordered them to show themselves at ramparts. Khālid was deceived, and this forced him to agree with the proposed treaty. In informing this, Khālid then sent a letter to Abū Bakr,[29] who sent the answer right away.[30] Khālid then collected the booty (*ghanāʾim*), taking one-fifth (*khumus*), with which a delegation to Medina was sent.[31] Khālid then proposed to Mujjāʿa's daughter. Some Medinans, such as Hassān b. Thābit, showed disappointment with this, sending poem on this matter to Abū Bakr. Having consulted with ʿUmar about this matter, Abū Bakr sent a letter to Khālid criticizing this marriage. Khālid, interestingly, knew that this idea came from ʿUmar. The People of Yamāma, however, were still on the side of Khālid and were therefore disappointed with Abū Bakr's criticism.[32]

Ibn Aʿtham (d. 314/926) basically summarizes the accounts of al-Wāqidī, leaving aside the detailed conversation, the texts of letters, and the warriors' poems.[33] Ibn al-Aʿtham, however, offers a rather systematic story in that he divides each event under the following headings: Abū Bakr ordered Khālid to march on Yamāma; the meeting of Khālid with Mujjāʿa and Sāriya b. ʿĀmir; the battle between Khālid's troops and Musaylima's [in ʿAqraba]; [the courage of] al-Barrāʾ b. Mālik, a brother of Anas b. Mālik; the treaty made by Khālid and Mujjāʿa; the number of victims; Khālid's letter to Abū Bakr after signing the treaty; and the marriage of Mujjāʿa's daughter to Khālid.

Ibn Ḥubaysh also bases some of his accounts on those of al-Wāqidī. However, we will discuss this issue later, turning now to Khalīfa b. Khayyāt's accounts.

Khalīfa b. Khayyāt

Khalīfa b. Khayyāt (d. 240/854) employs a rather different style in telling the story of the battle of Yamāma in that he presents as many as 18 *riwāyas* and their *isnāds*. One of the transmitters is Ibn Isḥāq upon whom Khalīfa based nine *riwāyas* (A, G, J, K, M, N, O, P, and Q). Interestingly, Khalīfa uses his transmissions that extend back to the authority of Anas b. Mālik, a Companion of the Prophet and participant of the war (reports B, C, I, L, and R).[34] Khalīfa mentions other eyewitnesses of the battle: ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar (M),

[28] Wāqidī also presents the poem by Mujjāʿa. Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 138.

[29] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 141.

[30] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 141.

[31] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 142.

[32] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 146.

[33] Aḥmad b. Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *al-Futūḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿIlmiyya, 1406/1989) 28-40.

[34] Interestingly, Asqalānī does not mention the participation of Anas b. Mālik in the war, see his *al-Iṣāba* vol. 1, 72.

Waḥshī (N), and perhaps ʿUrwa[35] (report D). It is interesting that one report is attributed to a man from Yamāma (report H), that is Qays b. Ṭalq[36] —whose father Ṭalq b. ʿAlī served as a member of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa that came to Medina during the lifetime of Muḥammad (see chapter seven above). It is therefore not surprising that report H covers the heroic side of Abū Maryam, a man from Yamāma, who killed Zayd b. ʿUmar. In view of all reports, Khalīfa seems to stress the running of the battle and the detailed accounts on how certain men—be they from the side of Muslims or from that of Musaylima—were killed. To present the summaries of each report:

A. Abū Bakr sent Khālid b. al-Walīd to Yamāma. On the road, Khālid encountered Mujjāʿa with his people, all of whom Khālid killed except Mujjāʿa. In the battle, al-Rajjāl b. ʿUnfuwa was the first man whom the Muslim forces killed. Thābit b. Qays, on the side of Muslims, was then killed.[37]

B. Anas b. Mālik met Thābit b. Qays before the latter was killed during the battle of Yamāma.[38]

C. The meeting of Anas with Thābit during the battle.[39]

D. The story of the death of Musaylima.[40]

E. Abū Maryam killed Zayd b. ʿUmar

F. Abū Maryam killed Zayd b. ʿUmar.[41]

G. Zayd b. ʿUmar was killed.[42]

H. Abū Maryam killed Salama b. Subayḥ.[43]

I. The duel between al-Barrāʾ and Muḥkam which brought about the slaughter of Muḥkam.[44]

J. ʿAbdarraḥmān b. Abū Bakr killed Muḥkam.[45]

K. Musaylima's troops moved to the walled garden. Al-Barrāʾ then asked his fellows to throw himself into it.[46]

35 He is ʿUrwa b. Rifāʿa al-Anṣārī. For more on him, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba* vol. 3, 166.

36 For more on Qays, see Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325 H) vol. 7, 398-399.

37 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt al-ʿUṣfūrī, *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyād*, ed. Akrām Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Najaf: Maṭbaʿa al-Adab fī-l-Najf al-Ashraf, 1386/1967) 72-73.

38 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 73.

39 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 73.

40 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 73.

41 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74.

42 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74.

43 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74.

44 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74.

45 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74.

46 *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 74-75.

L. Al-Barrā' threw himself into the walled garden.[47]

M. A black slave killed someone important.[48]

N. Waḥshī tells his own story on how he killed Musaylima.[49]

O. Khālid and Mujjāʿa looked for the corpse of Musaylima.[50]

P. Mujjāʿa called upon Khālid to make a treaty.[51]

Q. Abū Bakr sent an order to Khālid to kill all men of Ḥanīfa.[52]

R. Abu Dujāna jumped into the walled garden and broke his leg, he was then killed.[53]

Not only does Khalīfa mention the specific number of martyrs from the Muslim side (five hundred including Anṣār, Muhājirūn, and others), he also provides the list of their names.[54]

Al-Balādhurī

Although al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) presents a summary of the events of Yamāma, he still declares his sources on many occasions. According to him, the outline of the battle of Yamāma runs as follows: Abū Bakr sent Khālid to fight the people of Yamāma. On the road, Khālid encountered Mujjāʿa and his men, all of whom Khālid killed sparing only Mujjāʿa. In the battle between Khālid's troops and the people of Yamāma, al-Rajjāl and Muḥakkim (Muḥkam) b. Ṭufayl b. Subayʿ were killed, as were many distinguished Muslims, some of whom were the readers of the Qur'ān. The people of Yamāma took refuge in the garden of death (*ḥadīqat al-mawt*) where Musaylima was killed. Al-Balādhurī mentions six killers: Khidāsh b. Bashīr b. al-ʿĀṣim,

[47] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 75.

[48] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 75.

[49] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 75-76.

[50] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 76.

[51] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 76.

[52] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 77.

[53] *Tārīkh khalīfa b. khayyāt* 77.

[54] Later writers also mentions the names of the martyrs, see, for instance, Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, n.d.) vol. 1, 109-11; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwāt ibn ḥubaysh/Kitāb al-ghazawāt al-ḍāmina al-kāmila wa-l-futūḥ al-jāmiʿa al-ḥāfila al-kā'ina fi ayyām al-khulafā' al-awwal al-thalātha: Abī bakr al-ṣiddīq wa abī hafṣ ʿumar wa abī ʿamr dhī al-nūrayn ʿuthmān*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992) vol. 1, 100-103; Al-Dhahabī, *al-ʿIbār fī khabar man ghabar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Kuwait: Mudīr Maʿhad al-Makhtūtat bi Jāmiʿa al-Duwāl al-ʿArabiyya, 1960) vol. 1, 14-15; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 366-367; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Maʿārif, 1966) vol. 6, 334-341.

ʿAbdalla b. Zayd b. Thaʿlaba, Abū Dujāna Simāk b. Kharāsha, ʿAbdalla b. Zayd b. ʿĀṣim, Waḥshī, and Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān.[55]

Al-Balādhurī also tells us that the Anṣār were originally reluctant to join the troops under the command of Khālid, but they eventually changed their minds.[56] Al-Balādhurī also presents a man from Ḥanīfa as his source.[57] In the report which tells about the participation of Nusayba, a woman in the battle, al-Balādhurī mentions al-Wāqidī as his source.[58] On the treaty between Khālid and Mujjāʿa, al-Balādhurī's accounts do not contradict those of others.[59] However, he is silent on the marriage of Khālid to Mujjāʿa's daughter.

Al-Yaʿqūbī

Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 292/905) provides a short but clear summary of the battle of Yamāma, in which he chronologically outlines some basic important events, which can be presented here as follows: Abū Bakr initially dispatched Shuraḥbil b. Ḥasana to fight Musaylima in Yamāma. However, the caliph then sent Khālid b. al-Walīd whose force was stronger than that of Shuraḥbil. On the road, Khālid encountered Mujjāʿa accompanied by a group of men whom Khālid beheaded, except Mujjāʿa. Khālid then marched to Musaylima whose force consisted of the people of Rabīʿa. A fierce battle between the two hostile parties occurred. Abu Dujāna successfully wounded Musaylima, but it was Waḥshī who took the prophet's life. Mujjāʿa then called upon Khālid to make a treaty. In displaying the force of Yamāma, Mujjāʿa dressed up women in the equipment of soldiers. Not only did this deceive Khālid, it also forced him to sign the treaty. Khālid then suggested a marriage between himself and Mujjāʿa's daughter and the two were married. In response, Abū Bakr sent a letter criticizing Khālid for rushing to a woman so shortly after so many Muslim warriors had died.[60]

Al-Ṭabarī

In the following 24 reports, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) bases most of his repetitive and long accounts on different sources other than the aforementioned ones. The summary of each report is as follows:

[55] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 106-107; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 87-88. See also our earlier discussion in chapter four on the Umayyads' claims about Muʿāwiya's role in killing Musaylima.

[56] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 107-108.

[57] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 108.

[58] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 111.

[59] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 108-109.

[60] Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 109.

A. Musaylima's followers defeated ʿIkrima b. Abū Jahl. Abū Bakr then ordered Khālid b. al-Walīd to face them. Under Khālid's command, Thābit b. Qays and al-Barrā' led the Anṣār, whereas Abū Ḥudhayfa led the Muhājirūn.[61]
B. The force of Ḥanīfa consisted of 40,000 men. Upon Shuraḥbil's defeat, Khālid arranged a strategy to face the Ḥanīfa.[62]
C. Abū Bakr reinforced Khālid with Sāliṭ, to back Khālid up from behind.[63]
D. Musaylima established his army in ʿAqraba in which Muḥakkam (Muḥkam) and al-Rajjāl bore responsibility in each of two wings. Khālid started to attack them along with Shuraḥbil. Khālid encountered Mujjāʿa, who, with sixty men, had just returned from raids that sought the blood revenge from the ʿĀmir and Tamīm. Due to his suspicion, Khālid killed these people and kept Mujjāʿa as hostage.[64]
E. Abū Hurayra tells of his acquaintance with al-Rajjāl. Abū Hurayra goes on about the encounter of Khālid with Mujjāʿa whose twenty-three men accompanied him. Khālid started to march on to Yamāma. On the other side, Musaylima and his people went to ʿAqraba where the battle between the two sides then occurred. Shuraḥbil b. Musaylima burned the spirit of his people. Sālim bore the standard of the Muhājirūn, whereas Thābit did so for the Anṣār. The organization of the Bedouins was based on their origins. On the other side, al-Muḥakkam (Muḥkam) b. Ṭufayl ordered the people of Ḥanīfa to enter the garden.[65]
F. Khālid interrogated the men who accompanied Mujjāʿa. Their response was: *minna nabī wa minkum nabī* (a prophet from us, and a prophet from you). All of them were then killed, except Mujjāʿa and Sāriya b. ʿĀmir. Mujjā'a was then chained. Al-Rajjāl was killed in the battle.[66]
G. The Ḥanīfa attacked Khālid's tent. Thābit b. Qays was killed, as was then Zayd b. ʿUmar. Al-Barrā' b. Mālik fought bravely. On the other side, Muḥkam b. al-Ṭufayl raised the spirit of his people, but soon ʿAbdarraḥmān b. Abū Bakr killed him. Musaylima and his troops took refuge in the walled garden. Al-Barrā' asked his fellows to throw himself over the wall of the garden. As soon as he was inside, he opened the gate for the Muslim

[61] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 281. For the discussion on the transmission of al-Sārī—Shu'ayb—Sayf, see appendix 9.1 below. On Sahl b. Yūsūf (d. ca 190 H.), see, ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 4, 260.

[62] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 281. On Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlā' (d. 154), see *Tahdhīb* vol. 12, 178-180.

[63] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 282. Sāliṭ b. ʿAmr is the one whom The Prophet sent to Thumāma and Hawdha. See our discussion in chapter seven above.

[64] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 286.

[65] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 287.

[66] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 288.

troops. The battle between the two sides became increasingly fierce until Waḥshī and another man of Anṣār killed Musaylima.[67]

H. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar heard that the black slave killed Musaylima.[68]

I. Zayd b. ʿUmar encountered al-Rajjāl. Zayd, Thābit, and Abū Ḥudhayfa raised the morale of Muslim troops to continue their fight.[69]

J. Sālim stood firmly as a standard bearer.[70]

K. Zayd and Thābit summoned their fellow Muslims to continue their fight.[71]

L. ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb questioned his son, ʿAbdalla, as to why he was not killed in the battle like his brother Zayd.[72]

M. On the side of Muslim troops, the settled people—the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār—and the people of the desert accused each other of being cowards. ʿAbdarraḥmān b. Abū Bakr killed Muḥakkam, whereas Zayd killed al-Rajjāl.[73]

N. The battle between the two sides was fierce. Muslim troops organized themselves according to their banners. Khālid tried to approach Musaylima, but the latter ran away. Muḥkam ordered his people to enter the garden, where Waḥshī, however, killed Musaylima. 10 000 men were killed.[74]

O. Al-Barrāʾ b. Mālik asked his fellow Muslims to throw himself into the walled garden. This enabled him to open the gate through which the Muslim troops entered.[75]

P. Mujjāʿa showed Khālid the corpse of Muḥkam.[76]

Q. Mujjāʿa showed Khālid the corpse of Muḥkam and Musaylima.[77]

R. Abū Bashīra of Anṣār unsuccessfully chased Aghlab b. ʿĀmir b. Ḥanīfa, who had pretended to be a dead man among the victims of Ḥanīfa.[78]

S. Mujjāʿa dressed the women of Ḥanīfa in soldiers' cloths. This enabled Mujjāʿa to persuade Khālid to sign a treaty. 600 Muhājirūn and Anṣār were

[67] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 289.
[68] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 291.
[69] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 291.
[70] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 291.
[71] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 292.
[72] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 292.
[73] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 292.
[74] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 293.
[75] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 294.
[76] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 294.
[77] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 295.
[78] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 295.

killed, whereas 7,000 of Ḥanīfa were killed in ʿAqraba and another 7,000 in the garden.[79]

T. Mujjāʿa and Khālid agreed on a treaty by which Khālid accepted one quarter of the captives, gold, silver, and suits of mail.[80]

U. Khālid gained half of the captives, gold, silver, suits of mail, horses, gardens, and farms.[81]

V. Abū Bakr sent a letter ordering Khālid to execute all men of Ḥanīfa. Salama b. ʿUmayr of Ḥanīfa tried to kill Khālid, but failed. After to the chase, Salama committed suicide.[82]

W. The treaty that was signed by Khālid bound all of Ḥanīfa, except those who inhabited al-ʿIrd and al-Qurayya, which were then raided.[83]

X. Khālid married Mujjāʿa's daughter; Abū Bakr showed disappointment with this. The delegation of the tribe Ḥanīfa came to Abū Bakr.[84]

Turning to the *isnād* of the above reports, 17 reports—A, B, C, D, E, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, U, V, and W—depend on the transmission of al-Sārī—Shuʿayb—Sayf. In addition, all of the transmissions from Sayf are extended back to earlier sources (Qāsim b. Muḥammad,[85] Rijāl, Jābir b. Fulān, unknown man, Abū Hurayra, ʿUbayd b. ʿUmar, Sālim b. ʿAbdalla, a man from the tribe of Suḥaym, ʿAmr b. Shuʿayb, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, and Sahl b. Yūsuf).[86] However, only one of them mentions a prominent witness of the Battle of Yamāma, namely ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar (report H). Other witnesses are also mentioned, but they are unknown men (reports C, D, and N). Many transmissions also end in the second level of informants, who might have heard from the main witness such as reports J and L (in both cases, Sālim b. ʿAbdalla[87] may have heard the story from his father ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar). In reports E and V, Abū Hurayra serves as the end of transmission, whose reliability is difficult to accept, as no report explains Abū Hurayra's participation in the battle. However, under

[79] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 296.

[80] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 297.

[81] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 298.

[82] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 299.

[83] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 300.

[84] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 300.

[85] We have at least four persons with the same name of Qāsim b. Muḥammad, none of whom, however, is reported to have witnessed the battle of Yamāma; see *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 333-337. However, it seems likely that Qāsim in the above transmission is Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. after 105), see *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 333-335.

[86] On Sahl b. Yūsūf (d. ca 190 H.), see, ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 4, 260.

[87] We find at least four persons with the name Sālim b. ʿAbdalla, who were not eyewitnesses to the Battle of Yamāma. One of them is Sālim b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar b. Khaṭṭāb (d. 106 H). It stands to reason to assume that Sālim b. ʿAbdalla heard the story of the battle from his father, ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar.

the caliphate of ʿUmar he served as governor of Yamāma. Thus, Abū Hurayra might have heard the reports about the battle from someone else, regardless his acquaintances with al-Rajjāl prior to the battle.

Six reports—F, G, H, Q, T, and X—depends on the chain of transmission of Ibn Ḥumayd—Salama—Muḥammad b. Isḥāq. Five of them—F, G, Q, T, and X—end with Ibn Isḥāq, whereas only reports H and G end with earlier sources (Abū Hurayra and ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar).

Nonetheless, many later Muslim historians relied on al-Ṭabarī's accounts. Among them is Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1223) who presents a systematic summary of the story, but makes no mention of the chain of transmission.[88] Likewise, al-Nuwayrī (d. 677 H) bases most of his accounts of the battle of Yamāma on those of al-Ṭabarī, except for al-Nuwayrī's mention of the appearance of the martyred Thābit b. Qays in a Medinan's dream.[89] Similarly, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1407) also bases his accounts on those of al-Ṭabarī. However, Ibn Khaldūn uses his own style in presenting the story of the battle, by paraphrasing most of the stories, deleting unwanted lengthy description, and making no mention of the sources. Among the stories that Ibn Khaldūn does not present in detail is, for instance, the marriage of Mujjāʿa's daughter to Khālid and the reactions of some Muslims to it, including Abū Bakr.[90]

Similarly, Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) devotes more attention to the story rather than to the sources, whose complete transmissions are not always shown. However, he still indicates that he returns the stories to the authorities of al-Wāqidī, Khalīfa b. Khayyād, and al-Ṭabarī.[91] With the same sources, al-Dhahabī highlights some parts of the aforementioned events in his short account.[92]

Ibn Ḥubaysh and al-Balansī

As was mentioned earlier, Ibn Ḥubaysh (d. 584/1188) bases many of his accounts of the battle of Yamāma on al-Wāqidī's, which can be seen in the way in which Ibn Ḥubaysh outlines the chronological order of the events of Yamāma. In addition, some reports and a few poems cited are attributed to al-Wāqidī's transmission. However, Ibn Ḥubaysh provides more details of the battle of Yamāma, and presents the events from various perspectives. Fur-

[88] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 360-367.

[89] Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1975) vol. 19, 97-98; see also Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 335.

[90] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh ibn khaldūn al-musammā bi kitāb al-ʿibar wa diwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar wa min āṣarahum min dhawī al-sulṭān al-akbar* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Nahḍa, 1355/1936) vol. 2, 290.

[91] Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 323-326.

[92] Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhir wa-l-aʿlām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1410/1990) book *Ahd al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidīn* 38-41.

thermore, Ibn Ḥubaysh acknowledges the authorities of following names: Ibn Isḥāq,[93] Yāzid b. Shārik al-Fizārī,[94] Yaʿqūb b. Muḥammad al-Zuhrī,[95] ʿIkrima,[96] Rāfiʿ b. al-Khudayj,[97] Ḍamra b. Saʿīd,[98] Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī,[99] Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥibbān,[100] Huṣayn b. ʿAbdarraḥmān b. Saʿd b. Muʿādh,[101] and Maḥmūd b. Labīdh.[102]

Additionally, Ibn Ḥubaysh presents three reports on the participation of Nusayba b. Kaʿb, a woman whose hand was lost during the battle. Her keen participation in the battle, it is said, was mainly triggered by her revenge for her son, Ḥabīb b. Zayd whom Musaylima had tortured and killed. Her other son, ʿAbdalla b. Zayd claimed to have killed Musaylima.[103] However, Ibn Ḥubaysh, based on the transmission of ʿUbaydalla b. ʿĀdi b. al-Khiyār,[104] also presents another story which lends weight to the common view that it was Waḥshī who killed Musaylima.

Although al-Kalāʿī often makes no mention of the complete chain of transmission, his accounts are similar to those of al-Balansī (d. 613/1237), which are directly attributed to the names of Companions and Successors, e.g. Rāfiʿ b. Khudayj, a witness and participant of the battle[105] and Shārik b. al-Fizārī, the courier whom Abū Bakr trusted to send his letter to Khālid.[106] Al-Balansī also mentions ʿUmayr b. Ḍābiʾī al-Yashkūrī who,[107] together

93 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn Ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 63.

94 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn Ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 68, 91. See also the below discussion on Shārik b. Fizārī to whom al-Balansi extends his accounts.

95 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 57, 63. On Yaʿqūb b. Muḥammad al-Zuhrī (d. 213/828), see *Tahdhīb* vol. 11, 396-397; *GAS* vol. 8, 128. Ibn Ḥajar tells us that al-Wāqidī transmits reports from Yaʿqūb, who is reported to have composed *al-Maghāzī*.

96 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 67.

97 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 72, 73. More on Rāfiʿ b. Khudaj al-Anṣārī, who died in the reign of Muʿāwiya, see *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 495-496.

98 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 75, 84, 85, 86. On Ḍamra, a successor, see Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 4, 461.

99 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 84, 93. On Abū Saʿīd, whose real name was Saʿd b. Mālik b. Sinān al-Anṣārī, see *Iṣāba* vol. 2, 35.

100 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 86. For more on Ibn Hibbān see, *Tahdhīb* vol. 9, 507-508.

101 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 88. For more on Husayn (d. 126), see *Tahdhīb* vol. 2, 380-381.

102 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 89, 93. For more on Maḥmūd, an Anṣārite Companion, see *Iṣāba* vol. 3, 387.

103 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 85-88.

104 On ʿUbaydalla b. ʿĀdi (d. 90 H), see *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 36-37.

105 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 56, 81, 84.

106 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 64. al-Asqalānī, however, mentions Shārik b. Saḥmāk, instead of b. al-Fizārī, whom Abū Bakr sent as a courier to Khālid during the battle of Yamāma. See *Iṣāba* vol. 2, 150.

107 Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 68.

with Thumāma, stood bravely on the side of Medina in facing the people of Yamāma before Khālid's arrival (see also chapter seven above). Al-Balansī also mentions Ḍamra b. Saʿīd al-Mazīnī as his source, who in turn relies on someone from Ḥanīfa.[108] Al-Balansī also mentions the following Anṣārites authorities: Wāqid b. ʿAmr,[109] Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī,[110] Ibn Ḥibbān,[111] and Maḥmūd b. Lābidh,[112] Yaʿqūb al-Zuhrī.[113]

Equally interesting is that Ibn Ḥubaysh and al-Balansī preserve the accounts of the battle told personally by Khālid b. al-Walīd, who highlights the strength of Ḥanīfa's force. The general also goes on about the meeting of the two hostile factions in detail. The defeat of Muslim troops three times over was also admitted. In addition, Khālid portrays the fierce battle: the warriors firmly stood in their lines of troops, yelled, fought, raised the spirits of their fellows, and struck their swords with those of their enemies. The combat that occurred outside and inside the garden was portrayed. Khālid also tells us that while riding his horse he faced an enemy who was also a horse rider. Due to the fierce duel, both fell from their horses and continued the fight on the ground. Khālid finally killed his enemy, but was himself wounded seven times. It is hard to accept the authenticity of this story, which contain dramatic elements and the absence of transmission.[114]

As with the previous accounts, it is Muḥkam who ordered his people to come into the walled garden, according to Ḍamra b. Saʿīd.[115] What Ḍamra and al-Ḥārith b. al-Fuḍayl[116] disputed is who killed Muḥkam. For Ḍamra, ʿAbdarraḥmān b. Abī Bakr was responsible for it, whereas for al-Ḥārith, Khālid was. Compromise is then reached in that both joined in killing the man.[117]

Another detailed account is that Khālid and his troops performed the *Ẓuhr* (afternoon prayer) while fighting. The fight continued it was time for the *ʿAṣr* (evening prayer).[118] Interestingly, it is said that Abū Bakr, while sending Khālid to Yamāma, had dreamt of eating a date from Ḥajar, a sign which foretells the successful mission of Khālid in Yamāma.[119] Another interesting story

[108] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 73.

[109] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 88. On Wāqid see *Tahdhīb* vol. 11, 107.

[110] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 89.

[111] See Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 98.

[112] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 104.

[113] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 118, 124. See n. 95 earlier.

[114] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 78-80; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 90-93. For the defeat of Muslim troops three times over before gaining the final victory, see also *Tārīkh al-ridda* 64 and 80.

[115] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-Ridda* 94.

[116] On al-Ḥārith al-Anṣārī, a Successor, see *Tahdhīb* vol. 2, 154.

[117] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 94.

[118] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 103. Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 84.

[119] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 114-115; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 95.

preserved by al-Balansī and Ibn Ḥubaysh is that at the end Khālid and Mujjāʿa fought and threatened one another with their swords.[120]

Al-Balansī also goes into considerable detail in telling each event: Khālid and Mujjāʿa's searching for Musaylima's corpse, Mujjāʿa's dressing the Ḥanāfite women up as warriors, the signing of the treaty by both men,[121] disagreement among Khālid, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar over the marriage of Khālid to Mujjāʿa daughter,[122] the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa to Medina after the war, [123] and the appearance of the martyred Thābit b. Qays in someone's dream.[124]

Unlike al-Yaʿqūbī, Ibn al-Athīr, or Ibn Khaldūn who attempted a general outline of the main events, Ibn Ḥubaysh and particularly al-Balansī stress the detailed accounts of the battle by relying on many personal narrations. It is not surprising that several embellishments appear in highlighting the roles of certain people in the battle. Ibn Ḥubaysh and al-Balansī both employed repetitive style leading to a lengthy narration. In terms of general outline, however, they do not contradict al-Wāqidī and al-Ṭabarī. What characterizes al-Balansi's presentation in particular is that he stresses the greater role of the Anṣārites. This is not surprising, though, as he attributes many of his accounts to the transmission of Anṣārite Successors.

Assessing the Sources

Did the battle between Khālid's force and Musaylima's in Yamāma really happen? What can lend support to the assumption of the occurrence of this event? Did later Muslim literature just invent these stories—in accordance with *ayyām* contents?[125]

It seems hard to rely on the oldest accounts of al-Wāqidī to argue for the occurrence of the battle, as he does not declare his sources. Nor can we base

[120] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 94; Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 113-114.

[121] A few people from both sides—such as Salama b. ʿUmayr, from the side of Yamāma and most Anṣārites—were disappointed with the concluding treaty, wanting to continue the war instead. See Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 107-108; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 91-92.

[122] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 109-112. Al-Balansī's account can perhaps be said as theatrical as that of al-Wāqidī.

[123] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 115-120. Ibn Ḥubaysh relies his above account on Yaʿqūb b. Muḥammad al-Zuhrī with the transmission of Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-ʿAlāʾ al-Ḥanafī. In the deputation of the Ḥanīfa to Medina after the war, Abū Maryam confessed to ʿUmar that he killed the latter's son, Zayd. See, Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 99.

[124] Al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 122-124. It was Bilāl b. al-Ḥārith who dreamed about the above story. On Bilāl, see *Iṣāba* vol. 1, 164. According to Ibn Ḥubaysh it was Sālim, a slave of Abū Ḥudhayfa, who appeared in someone's dream; see Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat ibn ḥubaysh* vol. 1, 95.

[125] *Ayyām al-ʿarab* refers to stories of many legendary wars prior to Islam whose accounts were expanded by later Arab literature. See, for instance, E. Mittwoch, "Ayyām al-ʿarab" in *EI*².

our assumption on those of al-Yaʿqūbī, for much the same reason. However, not only does Khalīfa b. Khayyāt present the transmission of the *riwāyas* he cites, he also offers perspectives about the stories that are different from those of al-Wāqidī. In a similar vein, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī present different reports about the event with different transmissions.

Ibn Khayyāt presents the eyewitnesses of the even: Anas b. Mālik, ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar, Waḥshī, and ʿUrwa, all of whom are said to have participated in the battle. Interestingly, al-Ṭabarī, notwithstanding a huge number of reports, presents only ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar as eyewitness of the event. The remainder of al-Ṭabarī's reports extend back to the second level, e.g., Abū Hurayra who did not participate in the War, Sālim b. ʿAbdalla, and to an unknown man.

Interestingly, Ibn Khayyāt, al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥubaysh, and al-Balansī owe certain information from the people of Ḥanīfa, which can perhaps corroborate the stories given by Muslim informants. Given this fact, the idea of the occurrence of the battle of Yamāma is supported by the information told by the two parties involved.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the growth of stories over the course of time is apparent. This can be seen in the stories presented by Ibn Ḥubaysh and al-Balansī, which are numerous, detailed, and exegetical. This leads us to conclude that these latest reports are full of *ayyām* contents which prevent us from using them as historical evidence.

To conclude, many of the stories of the battle of Yamāma were indeed the product of later literary interpretation. However, this does not mean that the battle never occurred at all. One can perhaps extract the skeleton of the story from the aforementioned reports. Surprisingly, al-Yaʿqūbī—whose accounts are short and concise—already did this for us. In addition, with the accumulation of various reports originating from various transmissions it is plausible to argue that the battle between Khālid's force and Musaylima's did indeed occur.

It is noteworthy that the reports which glorify Muslim forces, i.e., those highlighting the brave acts of Muslim warriors that enabled them to attain victory did indeed grow over the course of time. However, the reports that portray Musaylima and his forces remain meager. In most instances, they shrink; the later the reports, the more silent they are on Musaylima. These Muslim scholars, who had no interest whatsoever in enlarging the story of their enemy, refrained from commenting on Musaylima.

An Old Movement with the Old Prophet

As was argued at the beginning of this chapter, Musaylima did not found his movement after Muḥammad's death. It may well be that Musaylima intended to seize the momentum of this event by inciting his people to declare Yamāma's independence from Medina. However, this movement was

not merely a reaction to the death of another Prophet. As argued elsewhere in this study, Musaylima claimed to be a prophet no later than Muḥammad did.

Some aforementioned reports preserved by al-Wāqidī, al-Ṭabarī, and later Muslim writers lend weight to this argument. When interrogated by Khālid, the people of Ḥanīfa who accompanied Mujjāʿa innocently answered: *innahu shārik muḥammad b. ʿabdalla fī nubuwwatih* (he [Musaylima] is indeed the partner in prophethood of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdalla), according to al-Wāqidī.[126] The wording, according to al-Ṭabarī-Ibn Isḥāq, reads: *minna nabī wa minkum nabī* (a prophet from us, and a prophet from you).[127] Ibn Ḥubaysh states that these people testified (*yashhadūn*) the prophethood of Musaylima.[128] Inferring from this story, we can speculate that the people of Ḥanīfa and perhaps most of the inhabitants of Yamāma embraced Musaylima's cult. In doing so, they seem to have held to the concept of the co-existence of many prophets in Arabia. The letter of Musaylima, presented in chapter one and further discussed earlier in chapter two, confirms this claim that both prophets held the same authority (*min musaylima rasulillāh ila Muḥammad rasulillāh*). In a similar vein, the two couriers—sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad—bore witness to the prophethood of both.

The story of Ḥabīb b. Zayd, whom Musaylima tortured and killed, lends support to the concept of co-existence of the two prophets proposed by Musaylima. When asked about the prophethood of Muḥammad, Zayd answered that he bore witness to it. However, when asked about Musaylima's prophethood, he answered "I do not listen" (*lā asmaʿ*).[129] Inferring from this, Musaylima demanded the acknowledgment of both his prophethood and Muḥammad's.

Equally interesting is the position of Mujjāʿa, which, drawn from many reports, seems to be inconsistent. As was noted in chapters five and seven, he acted as a member of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa that came to Medina. As with other members of the deputation, he converted to Islam, a point that al-Wāqidī highlights in relating his meeting with Khālid prior to the battle of ʿAqraba.[130] According to the reports preserved by al-Jāḥiẓ, however, he bore witness to the prophethood of Musaylima (see chapter seven and nine above). It is also said that the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān granted Mujjāʿa many pieces of cultivated land.[131] Given these facts,

[126] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 119; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ* vol. 1, 31.

[127] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 288; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 324; Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām, Ahd al-khulafa al-rashidin* 40.

[128] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 61; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 72.

[129] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 86; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 96.

[130] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 119; Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ* vol. 1, 31; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 72.

[131] See Balādhurī, *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 111. It is hard to believe that Muḥammad, whom Mujjāʿa only met once during the deputation of the Ḥanīfa, granted him cultivated land. It is likely that Abū Bakr did this, during his journey to Medina after the battle of Yamāma. This was probably due to his merit in mediating between the Medinans and the people of Ḥanīfa. The later

one may be tempted to seek a compromise that Mujjāʿa had embraced Musaylima's cult before his conversion to Islam. This, however, seems unlikely. As was demonstrated in chapters nine and ten, Islam and Musaylima's cult, both of which shared many basic teachings in common, were siblings. For the people of Yamāma, accepting Islam did not necessarily mean leaving aside their own cult, that is Musaylima's. Most of them, including Mujjāʿa, seem to have accepted Musaylima's prophethood in Yamāma and Muḥammad's in Medina, as Musaylima allowed—and perhaps even encouraged—them to do so. Simply put, there was no clear-cut division between Musaylima's cult and Islam in Yamāma before the War. If Mujjāʿa embraced Islam by the definition and the standard of Medinans, why did his men blatantly bear witness to the prophethood of Musaylima? Why did conflict between him and his men not occur? Certainly, Mujjāʿa's men subscribed to the views of their leader. As his people blatantly formulated their faith as described above, Mujjāʿa likewise bore witness to the prophethood of Musaylima and Muḥammad. The reason that Khālid did not kill him during their encounter was due to the political consideration uttered by Sāriya b. ʿĀmir, Mujjāʿa's friend, and not due to his faith in the two prophets. That is, Mujjāʿa was the noblest and the most influential among the people of Yamāma. Additionally, Ṭalq b. ʿAlī is suspected to have believed in the prophethood of Musaylima.[132] Likewise, Thumāma is also said to have recited Musaylima's verses.[133]

It is worth recalling that only a few figures are said to have spoken against the apostasy movement of the tribe Ḥanīfa before Khālid's arrival to Yamāma (see chapter seven). Note that these reports were contained in the later work of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, notwithstanding their attribution to the earlier transmitter, i.e., Wathīma b. Mūsā. On this, one may speculate that the story of *Ridda* had evolved, and was mainly due to the idealization of the story by later Muslim narrators. Those who transmitted the stories were perhaps later generations of the people of Yamāma themselves who idealized their own ancestors, having been involved in Islamic tradition for generations.

The War between the 'Two Qur'āns'

The story of Musaylima had a certain relation somehow to the accounts of the first attempt to collect the materials of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr's reign, which was performed after the battle of Yamāma. However, no single Muslim or Western scholar has seriously related the story of this battle to the rivalry between the Muslim Qur'ān and Musaylima's qur'ān.[134] However,

caliphs—ʿUmar and ʿUthmān—likely continued their predecessor's favor to Mujjāʿa, who played leadership role in Yamāma.

[132] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 254.

[133] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960) vol. 5, 550.

[134] *Geschichte des Qorans*, ed. Friedrich Schwally (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961) vol. 2, 11-27; Bell and Watt, *Introduction to the Qur'ān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1977) 40-42.

before proceeding any further, it is worth lingering briefly on the history of the text of the Qur'ān.[135]

To this day, modern scholarship is still attempting to make the dim history of the text of the Qur'ān clearer.[136] Its reconstruction has still been hampered by, among other things, the lack of a comprehensive survey of material evidence.[137] So far, the oldest manuscript has been dated as early as 2nd/8th century.[138] Most of the efforts to reconstruct the history of this Scripture—from its revelation in Mecca and Medina to the date of the manuscript—have been based upon *riwāyas* (reports) preserved in much later Muslim literature.[139] We are told that a committee—led by Zayd b. Thābit under the order

See his accounts on the collection of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr, Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 117-137; Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies, Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 43-47.

135 Many have provided concise summaries of the history of the collection of the Qur'ān, see, for instance, Alford T. Welch, "Kur'an" in *EI*²; John Burton, "Collection of the Qur'ān" in *EQ*. Related to this issue, see also, for instance, François Déroche, "Manuscripts of the Qur'ān" in *EQ*; Christopher Melchert and Asma Afsaruddin, "Reciters of the Qur'ān" in *EQ*; Frederick Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān" in *EQ*.

136 See, for instance, Welch, "Kur'an" in *EI*² 404; Gerd R. Puin, "Observations on Early Qur'ān Manuscript in San'a," in Stefan Wild, *The Qur'ān as Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 107.

137 See, for instance, Déroche, "Manuscript" in *EQ* 273; see also H. Motzki, "The Collection of the Qur'ān, A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Development" *Der Islam* 78 (2001) 2; Ref. cited.

138 Up to this moment, most scholars are still awaiting the result of Berlin's project, whose aim is to show the evolution of the Qur'ān's text based upon filmed manuscripts recently discovered, which have been hidden since World War II.

Nonetheless, many have started to collect and analyze some early manuscripts of the Qur'ān by paying particular attention to the type of script that each manuscript employed. See, for instance, Déroche, *The Abbāsid Tradition, Qur'āns of the 8th to 10th Centuries AD* (Oxford: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992); David James, *The Master Scribes, Qur'āns of the 10th to 14th centuries AD* (Oxford: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992); idem, *After Timur, Qur'āns of the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Oxford: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992). For a guide for a general reader, see, for instance, Colin F. Baker, *Qur'ān Manuscripts, Calligraphy, Illumination, Design* (London: The British Library, 2007).

139 Both John Burton and Wansbrough have noted the exegetical nature of these *riwāyas* on the collection of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān. In addition, both scholars cast doubt on the authenticity of the information contained in these reports. However, these two scholars draw very different conclusions. For Burton, later Muslim scholars invented all of these accounts to lend support to theory of *naskh wa mansūkh* (abrogation and abrogated). Burton, in this regard, credited the collection of the Qur'ān to The Prophet himself who had played a great role. See his *The Collection* 162-163. For Wansbrough, by contrast, later Muslim scholars invented these accounts to lend weight to their belief in the early collection of the Qur'ān. This Scripture—serving as canon and *muṣḥaf* for the Muslim community—perhaps existed no earlier than the third/ninth century. See his *Qur'ānic Studies* 44-45.

H. Motzki, however, traced back these reports on the collection of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān—contained in the collections of al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Ṭayalisī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq and others—to the common link (originator), i.e., Ibn Shihāb al-

of Abū Bakr—collected the scattered materials of the Qur'ān. Two decades later, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān imposed a single codex (*muṣḥaf*) of the Qur'ān. In fact, this instruction had never been put into practice. This is due to the fact that the followers of Ubayy b. Kaʿb and ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd are reported to have still read their own codices;[140] not to mention various readings of a later ʿUthmānic codex. It is Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid (d. 324/936), with the support of the Abbāsid vizier Ibn Muqla (323/935), who enforced certain readings of the ʿUthmānic codex, also a means of prohibiting the reading of other codices.[141]

Thus, the pre-ʿUthmānic and ʿUthmānic codices[142]—in terms of variants readings (*qirā'as*) and scripts (*rasm*)—involve a long history. Simply put, in the year 1342/1923-4 the Royal Egyptian version has prevailed in the Muslim world.[143] Despite this long history, the vast majority of Muslims in the world believe that the text of the Qur'ān survived unchangingly from the time of the Prophet to the present.

Let us set aside the complex issue of the history of the Qur'ān, and rather focus our attention on the rivalry between the Muslim Qur'ān and Musaylima's qur'ān before the former was collected after the War of Yamāma.

Zuhrī (d. 124/742). This means that information about this matter already circulated in the Early Muslim community since the first quarter of the second century. See his "The Collection" 24, 27, 29, and 31.

140 In addition to the two above codices, Abū Mūsā ʿAbdalla b. Qays al-Ashʿārī and Miqdād b. ʿAmr are also reported to have collected the Qur'ān independently. See Schwally, *Geschichte* vol. 2, 28-29. It is also reported that the order of the sūras according to the codices of Ubayy and Ibn Masʿūd was different from that of the standard Qur'ān. See *Geschichte* vol. 2, 30-40. In addition, Schwally also notes two extra-suras found in the Ubayy's codex: *al-Nakhlaʿ* and *al-Ḥafd*. See *Geschichte* vol. 2, 34-35. See also, F. Leemhuis, "Codices" in *EQ*. Gerd R. Puin also indicates a few different orders of *sūra*, *āya*, and *rasm* (script) in the San'a manuscript. See his "Observations on Early Qur'ān Manuscript" in eds., Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-R. Puin, *Die Dunklen Anfänge, Neue Forschungen zur Enstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam* (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2007) 107-111.

141 See, for instance, Leemhuis, "Readings of the Qur'ān" in *EQ* 356.

142 Arthur Jeffery has collected these variant readings attributed to various codices; see his *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān, the Old Codices, the Kitāb Maṣāḥif of Ibn Abī Dāwūd together with A Collection of the Variant Readings from the Codices of Ibn Masʿūd, Ubai, ʿAlī, Ibn ʿAbbās, Anas, Abū Mūsā and other Early Qur'ānic Authorities which Present a Type of Text Anterior to that of the Canonical Text of ʿUthmān* (Ledien: Brill, 1937). Azami, in response to Jeffery's findings, argues that his observation on the different readings of the Qur'ān manuscript are based merely on quotations contained in many later Muslim works, i.e., *Maṣāḥif*. Azami also notes some mistakes committed by Jeffery and Mingana in proving variant readings of the Qur'ān. See his M. M. al-Azami, *The History of the Qur'anic Text, from Revelation to Compilation, A Comparative Study with Old and New Testaments* (Leicester: UK Islamic Academy, 2003). Alba Fedeli, in turn, indicates that variant readings do exist in different manuscripts of the Qur'ān—in terms of using different alphabets, word choices, word orders, and perhaps also errors committed by the scribes. However, this analysis does not conclude that there were significant different readings in other codices from that of ʿUthmānic one. See, "Early Evidences of Variant Readings of the Qur'ānic Manuscripts," in eds., Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-R. Puin, *Die Dunklen Anfänge* 293-316.

143 See Leemhuis, "Collection" *EQ*, 361.

As argued earlier, instead of between the Muslim party and those who apostatized from Islam, this War occurred between the followers of the two prophets. More precisely, it was between two movements of Arab monotheism, and not between Muslims and those who had apostatized from Islam. Once again, these two warring religious movements believed in the same God and shared some basic teachings, but each held a different qurʾān (reading) revealed by its own prophet. In other words, this battle occurred between those who defended the Muslim Qurʾān and those who defended of Musaylima's qurʾān. Indeed, this battle played a very decisive role in diminishing the cult of Musaylima and suppressing his qurʾān. Imagine a different scenario. Had Khālid's force been defeated, Islam would not have perished, since its center, Medina, was safe—thanks to the fact that none of these enemies attacked the city. In fact, as soon as Musaylima was killed and his people surrendered, not only did half of the people of Ḥanīfa serve as hostages, they were also forced to convert to Islam and were consequently forced to abandon the teachings of Musaylima.

Note that the war between the two qurʾāns is an important part of the story of the battle of Yamāma. It seems clear that the Muslim faction showed their spirit in defending their Qurʾān in the war. To illustrate, Sālim, a slave of Abū Ḥudhayfa and a standard bearer of the Muhājirūn, claimed that he was a *ḥāmil al-qurʾān* (a Qurʾān bearer). It is said that in a dispute with other Muhājirūns Sālim said "*biʾsa ḥāmil al-qurʾān anā idhan* (what a bad bearer of the Qurʾān I would be, then)."[144] Abū Ḥudhayfa, Sālim's master, also said, "*ya ahl al-qurʾān, zayyinū al-qurʾān bi al-faʿāl* (O people of the Qurʾān, ornament the Qurʾān with your deeds)."[145] In another instance, the Muslim faction was also called "*ahli sābiqa*/people of the past, *ahl al-faḍl*/people of the excellence, and *ahl al-qurʾān*."[146]

Many scholars[147] have paid serious attention to the words *ḥāmil, qurrā, aṣḥāb, ḥuffāz,* and *ahl*. According to their findings, however, there is no further evidence which suggests that those who were killed were *qurrāʾ*/reciters of the

[144] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 288, 291-292; trans. Donner, *History* 115-116, 121; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat* vol. 19, 91; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 68; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 79; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 363; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 324.

[145] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 291; trans. Donner, *History* 121; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-kāmil* vol. 2, 363. Ibn Ḥubaysh also named the Muslims *ḥāmilu al-Qurʾān*, see his *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 66; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 324.

[146] see Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 92; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 108.

[147] "*Die Verknüpfung der Sammlung mit dem Feldzug von Jemama steht auf sehr scwachen Füßen.*" Schwally finds only two Qurʾān reciters among the victims of the battles: ʿAbdalla b. Ḥafs b. Ghanīm and Sālim. See *Geschichte* vol. 2, 20. See also Bell and Watt, *Introduction* 41; Burton, *Collection* 119, 120, 121. Shaban understands the term *ahl al-qurrāʾ* as villagers (*ahl al-qurā*), instead of Qurʾān readers. This misunderstanding, according to him, occurred with Early Muslim discussion of this matter. See his *Islamic History* 23, 50-51

Qurʾān.[148] Only Sālim was noted to be a reciter of the Qurʾān,[149] whereas the rest of the martyrs in Yamāma, many scholars find, were not *qurrāʾ*. In fact, most of the martyrs were not prominent figures or even unknown Bedouins. For the sake of argument, the term *ḥāmil al-Qurʾān*, as Sālim claimed about himself, and *ahl al-Qurʾān*, as Abū Ḥudhayfa called his fellows—in the redaction preserved by al-Ṭabarī, did not refer to the 'conventional *qurrāʾ*' (those who memorized the whole Qurʾān)." Instead, these words refer to those who defended the Qurʾān, as the war was between the two qurʾāns. This implies that all Muslim warriors were Qurʾān bearers (*ḥāmilūn*) and people (*ahl/aṣḥāb*) of the Qurʾān. To put it differently, they were defenders of the Muslim Qurʾān who fought against the defenders of Musaylima's qurʾān.

Al-Wāqidī preserves the saying attributed to Khālid as follows:

> Restrain, o readers (*qurrāʾ*) of the Qurʾān; are you not afraid of the wrath of the Merciful, the punishment of the hellfire; restrain, o those who hold (*aṣḥāb*) Islam; where is "the qurʾān" of those who assume himself as a partner in prophethood and messengerhood with Muḥammad, are you not afraid of God who will show and punish the evil of your deeds.[150]

Although it is uncertain whether these words belong to Khālid or to any later narrators (e.g, al-Wāqidi), it does not prevent us from interpreting them. In either case, the word *qurrāʾ* does not refer to those who memorize the whole Qurʾān. Rather, it refers to general Muslims who often read the Qurʾān. It becomes clear when one looks at Khālid's challenge to another qurʾān that belongs to his enemy, Musaylima. Accordingly, Muslims were readers (*qurrāʾ*) of Muḥammad's Qurʾān, whereas Musaylima's followers were the 'readers of his qurʾān.' In giving estimation of the deaths from the side of Muslims, al-Wāqidī tells us that 700 out of 2200 martyrs were *ḥuffāz* (memorizers) of the Qurʾān.[151] These numbers clearly feature additional interpretation by al-Wāqidī. Ibn Khayyāt, however, gives a rather reasonable estimation, 30 or 50 out of 500 martyrs were *man ḥamala al-Qurʾān* (those who bore the Qurʾān).[152] If we understand the word *ḥuffāẓ* or *ḥāmil* as those who memorize any part of the Qurʾān, this makes sense. Note that most Muslims who met the Prophet or his Companions might have memorized at least a few verses of the Qurʾān. It also stands to reason that some prominent Companions—e.g. Abū Ḥudhayfa, Abu Dujāna, Zayd b. Khaṭṭāb, or Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās (among those who were killed in Yamāma)—also memorized some parts of

148 Al-Balādhurī used the word *qurrāʾ*, see his *Futūḥ* vol. 1, 106.

149 Burton, *Collection* 119-120. Sālim is also said to have collected his own *muṣḥaf* (codex). However, Jeffery finds only two words with peculiar readings attributed to Sālim's codex. See Jeffery, *Materials* 234.

150 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 129.

151 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 140.

152 Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Tārīkh* 77. See also the same expression *ḥamlah al-Qurʾān* in al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 77.

the Qur'ān. However, if we understand the word *ḥuffāz* or *ḥāmil* as those who memorized the whole Qur'ān, this is hard to accept. Certainly, this contradicts the fact that the Qur'ān was to be collected after this war, and the standardization came much later at the time of ʿUthmān. The notion of the whole Qur'ān at the war of Yamāma was not yet fixed, as each of many prominent Companions, as was reported, kept his own collection of the Qur'ān; each differed from the other in terms of quantity and structure.

Moreover, the rivalry between the two Qur'āns can also be felt in the following report: "When Rajjāl recites the Qur'ān for Musaylima, the latter rivals it with rhymed prose (*sajʿ*)."[153] Musaylima and al-Rajjāl thus attempted to compete with the Muslim Qur'ān. What the aforementioned account describes as the *sajʿ* of Musaylima is likely his qur'ān.[154] The story told by a man from Ṭayyi of the Thaʿlaba tribe lends weight to this idea, as he attested to the *kitāb* of Musaylima.[155] Additionally, al-Rajjāl is said to have memorized the *sūra al-Baqara* of the Muslim Qur'ān.[156] In another story of the battle of Yamāma, Muslims claimed the true *al-Baqara* as part of their Qur'ān. This can be seen in the saying of Thābit b. Qays who called his fellows: "*ya ahl aṣḥāb sūra al-Baqara* (O the people of the chapter of the cow)."[157] In addition, ʿUbaydalla b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUtba tells us that the slogan of the Muslims during the battle was "*ya aṣḥāb sūra al-baqara*."[158] The implication of this slogan can be postulated in two ways: it was intended either to provoke Muslim troops to strike against al-Rajjāl who learnt *al-Baqara* in the Medinan circle and then betrayed Muslims, or to strike the enemies who recited another version of *sūra al-Baqara* contained by Musaylima's qur'ān. The first conjecture seems more likely, whereas the second has no evidence.

Nonetheless, the war of the two Qur'āns revealed from the two prophets accompanied with the accounts of their practices of miracles can be seen in the way in which *tārīkh* literature tells the story of the battle of Yamāma. It is obvious that al-Wāqidī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥubaysh, al-Balansī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nuwayrī, and many later *tārīkh* writers put the fragments of Musaylima's qur'ān in the story of this battle. All of these writers have portrayed the same scenery: Whereas the defenders of Muḥammad's Qur'ān triumphed, the defeated Musaylima's qur'ān was ridiculed. Musaylima's miracles are also described as failures. Certainly, this story was written long after the war was over.

153 See Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 63.

154 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 63.

155 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 71.

156 Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 289; trans. Donner, *History* 117.

157 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 76; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-ridda* 87; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya* vol. 6, 324.

158 Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 82.

As recorded in *tārīkh* literature, Khālid b. al-Walīd, the general, seems also to have realized that this war was a war between 'two qur'āns.' Once he questioned Mujjāʿa, his father in law, about how the latter had rivaled Musaylima's qur'ān. Abū Bakr, the caliph, also asked one of Musaylima's former followers to recite an example of the defeated qur'ān (for both stories see chapter seven and nine above).

The following is another vital point of the story: the victors recorded their Qur'ān, whereas 'the defeated qur'ān' was doomed to be ignored. The collected materials of the Qur'ān also served as a monument for this early Muslim community in Medina in celebrating their achievement in defeating another qur'ān revealed by another prophet. Most of the Western and Muslim scholars have so far regarded the collection of the Qur'ān as a story independent from this war and have not considered the event in this context. They also have ignored the fact that there was more than one 'qur'ān' at that time. The mere internal factor from the early Muslim community has been 'overstressed,' leading to a conclusion that it is many prominent Muslims themselves who were worried about losing some parts of the Qur'ān, due to many of its readers being killed in the war.

What is also clear is that most early Muslim historians, e.g., Wāqidī, Ṭabarī, and others after them, provided full accounts of the battle and noted almost nothing about the collection of the Qur'ān. However, al-Wāqidī's short account on the relation of the martyrs in Yamāma and the order given by ʿUmar to collect the Qur'ān is quoted by a later historian, Ibn Ḥubaysh, who still keeps its context, the battle of Yamāma. [159] In a similar vein, Ibn al-Athīr relates this war to the effort of collecting the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr.[160] However, the battle between the followers of the two prophets and the defenders of the 'two qur'āns' remains a vital idea in the story. Moreover, Ibn al-Athīr provides a fuller account of the collection of the Qur'ān under the later caliph ʿUthmān in the year 30 H.[161]

Who removed the story from its context? Having relied on various reports (*ḥadīths*)[162] and *tārīkh* literature, the later Muslim scholars of the Qur'ān seem to have been responsible for this act.[163] Having devoted their passion to solely reconstruct the history of the Qur'ān, they had no interest whatsoever in either Musaylima's qur'ān or the story of the war between the two Qur'āns. It

[159] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 69. The above account is also extended back to the authority of ʿAbdalla b. ʿAwn al-Māliki.

[160] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 2, 366.

[161] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* vol. 3, 111-112.

[162] For discussion on the above reports, see Motzki, "The Collection" 16-21; cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ k. faḍā'il al-qur'ān* vol. 3, 1047-1048; Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* vol. 1, 10, 13; vol. 5, 188-189.

[163] See, for instance, Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-muqniʿ fī rasm maṣāḥif al-amṣār maʿa kitāb al-naqṭ* (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿa Dawla, 1932) vol. 3, 3-11; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-qur'ān* (Cairo: Matbaʿa al-Azhariyya al-Miṣriyya, 1318) vol. 1, 58-62.

is therefore not surprising that many later scholars have treated the story of the collection of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr as an independent account and removed it from the above context. In turn, the later Western scholars[164] still accept this rendition at the cost of ignoring the context.

Interestingly enough, the rivalry between the Muslim Qur'ān and Musaylima's qur'ān did not cease with the end of the Battle of Yamāma. As discussed at length in chapter two, at the time of ʿUthmān the people of Ḥanīfa still recited Musaylima's qur'ān in a mosque in Yamāma.

Flashback Style

After the war was over, Khālid, accompanied by Mujjāʿa, searched the dead body of Musaylima. Finding one, portrayed as a corpulent and comely man (*rajūlan jāsiman wāsiman*) lying outside the garden, Khālid asked Mujjāʿa about him. The latter answered: "No, by God, this one is better than he [Musaylima] and more noble; this is Muḥkam al-Yamāma." When Khālid saw a "small, yellowish, flat-nosed man" (*ruwayjal uṣayfar ukhaynas*) in the garden,[165] Mujjāʿa confirmed that this, indeed, was Musaylima. Al-Wāqidī describes his body as, "dirty weak corpse" (*ajfas ḍā'if al-badn*),[166] whereas in the words of Ibn Aʿtham it is a "yellow, dirty and weak body" (*aṣfar aḥmash da'īf al-badn*).[167] Ibn Khaldūn adds the word "ugly" (*damīm*) in indicating Musaylima's corpse.[168]

What is significant in the above portrayal is the element of ridicule. The words used to depict Musaylima are diminutive forms (*taṣghīr*). Muḥkam, on the other hand, is described to have been more noble than him. The way in which the narrators tell the story seems to affirm the defeat of Musaylima, by humiliating him. This style then influenced many later narrators in telling the whole story of Musaylima: his character, qur'ān, miracles, political leadership, and failures.

It is also noteworthy that, having told of Musaylima's several failures in producing miracles, al-Ṭabarī adds that "...all became evident after his defeat (*istabāna dhālika baʿda muhlikih*)."[169] This implies that the narrators employ a flashback style in telling the story of Musaylima: starting with his defeat

[164] Schwally, *Geschichte* vol. 2, 20. Burton has translated most of these *riwāyas* in his *The Collection* 117-159. See also Bell and Watt, *Introduction* 42. Both scholars cast doubts on the collection of the Qur'ān under Abū Bakr, but not under ʿUthmān.

[165] Ibn Khayyāt, *Tārīkh* vol. 1, 76; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 295; trans. Donner, *History* 126; Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazwat* vol. 1, 89-90; al-Balansī, *Tārīkh al-Ridda* 104; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat* vol. 19, 93; Muṭṭahar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-tārīkh* (Baghdad: al-Muthannā, 1916) vol. 5, 162.

[166] Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda* 137-138.

[167] Ibn Aʿtham, *al-Futūḥ* vol. 1, 36. Ibn Kathīr does not use diminutive form in portraying Musaylima's dead body; his wording rather reads "*rajul, aṣfar, akhnas*". See his *Bidāya* vol. 6, 325.

[168] Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* vol. 2, 290.

[169] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 285.

and returning the plot to the dim past. In other words, the story of the battle of Yamāma serves as both starting point and main theme, whereas the rest is mere interpolation. Unfortunately, we have no *sīra* of Musaylima at our disposal that either portrays him more fairly or provides the chronology of his lifetime.

Manifesto

Reclaiming the Forgotten Prophet

Minnā nabī wa minkum nabī
A prophet from us, and a prophet from you
(Mujjāʿa's followers to Khālid)

Lakum dīnikum wa lī dīn
To you be your own religion, and to me be mine
(Q. 109: 6)

Various perspectives can be used to view the figure of Musaylima. Those who hold 'Islamic orthodoxy' deem this figure as a mere Arab *kāhin* (soothsayer), who claimed 'false prophethood' and therefore opposed the 'true mission' of Prophet Muhammad. Musaylima was thus seen as the arch-liar (*al-kadhdhāb*)—a form of vituperation which Muslim literature has practiced for fifteen centuries. Those who adopt a critical approach to early Muslim sources and detect a bias in their reports consider that Musaylima's prophethood and that of Muhammad are deemed comparable. Accordingly, Musaylima can be regarded as a prophet and tribal leader for his people in Yamāma in the same way as Muhammad in Medina. However, those who are skeptical about the reliability of early Muslim sources deem Musaylima as a mere mythical figure. As an antagonist figure, Musaylima was thus invented to justify the prophetic office of Muhammad, the protagonist. The story of the enemy, like that of the main character, was likely invented. Having adopted an 'open minded approach,' I do not intend to burden the readers to accept a certain position entirely. All approaches can enrich our insight to read the sources critically. Nonetheless, our analysis leads us to the following conclusion.

In terms of the development of stories, the accounts of Musaylima preserved by Muslim sources show two tendencies: one of growth and one of reduction. The tendency towards growth can be seen in the following narrative development: the increasing number of stories about the execution of Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, who led the people of Ḥanīfa in practicing their faith during the prophethood of Musaylima (chapter two); the evolution of the concept of *khātam al-anbiyā*ʾ (chapter four); the later detailed stories of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa (chapter five); the later detailed stories of those who stood against Musaylima in Yamāma prior to the Battle of Yamāma (chapter seven); the growing pedigree attributed to Musaylima and that of his wife (chapter five and eight); the growing number of negative labels attributed to Musaylima (chapter eight); the later distortion of certain of Musaylima's verses with regard to the efforts of Muslim scholars to defend the argument of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* (chapter ten); and the detailed heroic acts of Muslim warriors at the Battle of Yamāma (chapter eleven).

The tendency towards reduction, on the other hand, can be seen in the following accounts: the incomplete text of Musaylima's letter presented by later Muslim authors (chapter one); the denial of the meeting between Musaylima and Muḥammad in later Muslim literature (chapter five); the relation of the revelation of certain verses of the Qurʾān to the stories of Musaylima (chapters eight and nine); the fact that many of the Musaylima's verses are only found in earlier Muslim works, whereas the later works ignore them (chapter nine); the denial of any relation of the Muslim Qurʾān to Musaylima's qurʾān (chapters four, eight, nine, ten and eleven).

To offer a simple formulation of our findings, the stories of Musaylima found in Muslim sources remain meager. The stories that exhibit the tendency towards growth are those which do not deal directly with him, but rather with matters related to the Muslims themselves. In fact, abundant stories glorifying Muslim protagonists—e.g. the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, or caliphs—have increased in number over the course of time.

Given these facts, it is possible to draw a picture of Musaylima from the accounts provided by his 'enemies.' Our analysis of the reports reveals that people have tended to speak more about the achievements of their own community in the past and yet tended to be silent about those of their enemies. It is true that Musaylima's image has been blackened while the negative labels attributed to him increase in Muslim literature. However, the growth of these reports is incomparable to those that glorified the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, and caliphs.

The following may explain the factors behind the aforementioned tendency. No Muslim scholar was interested in investigating the true nature of Musaylima's role in the past. Various genres of Muslim literature—*ḥadīth, sīra, tārīkh, iʿjaz, dalāʾil, tafsīr, asbāb al-nuzūl, ṭabaqāt, rijāl al-ḥadīth*, etc—preserve only very limited information concerning him. Additionally, Musaylima's

image as an enemy, as portrayed by Muslim narrators, has led to the following consequences. First, these narrators ignored important parts of Musaylima's story, and have largely suppressed his 'qur'ān' (reading), ignored his 'cult,' and erased his followers from Muslim history. Indeed, various genres of Muslim literature have succeeded in doing so for one and a half millennia. No one was eager to find a positive side to Musaylima. In fact, many found it necessary to 'curse' him whenever mentioning him. As a result, Muslim literature has preserved only the 'negative image' of Musaylima.

The above findings lead us to conclude that the small number of stories about Musaylima preserved in early Muslim literature should therefore be considered as containing some grains of truth. Additionally, it is possible to detect the propaganda intended to discredit him. This has in turn enabled us to reconstruct how the stories of Musaylima have been told and retold. Moreover, the removal of these 'negative images'—i.e. the bad labels, curses, and other denigrating elements—helps us to draw the skeleton of the story of Musaylima from what remains.

To stress again our argument over the existence of Musaylima as a prophet in Yamāma, unlike Muḥammad's community in Medina who survived, Musaylima's in Yamāma did not. Nor did Musaylima leave any trace in the form of monuments, manuscripts of his qur'ān, or graffiti. The Kaʿba of Yamāma is only mentioned in *tārīkh* literature; no hard evidence supports the assumption of its existence.

In arguing for Musaylima's existence, assume the historical existence of the following pertinent figures preserved in Muslim literature who attested to his existence. Prophet Muḥammad labeled Musaylima *al-kadhdhāb* (the arch liar), due to the rivalry in prophethood between the two. Abū Bakr ordered Muslim forces, under the command of Khālid b. Wālid, to march on Yamāma. Khālid b. Wālid's forces, in turn, defeated Musaylima's. ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar participated in the Battle of Yamāma. In the time of ʿUthmān, ʿAbdalla b. Masʿūd executed Ibn al-Nawwāḥa, the leader of Musaylima's cult in a mosque in Yamāma. Nuʿaym b. Masʿūd reports the stories of the two emissaries sent by Musaylima to Muḥammad. Thumāma allied himself to Medina and opposed Musaylima in Yamāma. Mujjāʿa served as a mediator between the Muslim forces and the tribe of Ḥanīfa after the Battle of Yamāma. The Shaykh from the tribe Ḥanīfa upon whom Ibn Ishaq relied for his accounts of the deputation of the tribe Ḥanīfa to Medina did exist. Finally, the people of Ḥanīfa who lived in Baṣra and from whom al-Jāḥiẓ heard some verses of Musaylima did exist. Relying on the above attestations, we can conclude that Musaylima did indeed serve as a prophet to his people in Yamāma.

Many genres of later Muslim literature have, nevertheless, attempted to bury the figure of Musaylima, or at the very least to belittle his role in history. Our examination of a considerable number of sources, however, leads us to the following findings. First, Muḥammad was not alone in claiming to

be a prophet. Early Muslim literature relates that many Arab figures prior to Muḥammad—e.g. Khālid b. Sīnān, Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān, Riʿāb b. Shannā, Asʿad Abū Karb al-Ḥamīrī, Quṣṣ b. Sāʿida, Zayd b. ʿAmr b. Nufayl, Abū Qays, Waraqa, ʿAdās, Baḥīra, and ʿAbdalla b. Jahsh al-Asadī—also attempted to link the pagan Arab traditions to certain monotheist traditions (see prologue). Other figures—Zayd b. ʿAmr b. Nufayl, Abū Qays, Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, and Abū ʿĀmir—claimed themselves to be the followers of *ḥanīf*, which may be interpreted as the blend of Judaism, Christianity, and indigenous Arab paganism values. The following figures—Umayya b. Abī Salṭ, Abū ʿĀmir, Ṭulayḥa, Aswad, Sajāḥ and Musaylima who were contemporaries of Muḥammad—claimed prophethood. After Muḥammad, several figures—al-Mukhtār, al Ḥārith b. Saʿīd, Muḥammad b. Saʿīd *al-maslūb*, Muqanna, Maḥmūd b. al-Faraj al-Nīsābūrī, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad—still claimed prophethood (chapter eight). It is noteworthy that the above claimants were historical persons, whereas 25 of the messengers and apostles mentioned by the Qurʾān are mythical figures. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that the Qurʾān often employs metaphorical or allegorical modes in telling its stories. To illustrate, many names of historical persons—Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, ʿAbdalla b. ʿUmar, Ibn Masʿūd, Ḥamza, Salmān, Zayd, Khadīja, Warāqa, ʿĀʾisha, and other prominent figures who played vital roles in nascent Islam—are absent from the Scripture. Thus, historical persons, including Musaylima and other Arab prophets, are often ignored, whereas mythical ones serving as archetypes are highlighted. Once again, nowhere does the Qurʾān mention the above claimants as contemporary of Muḥammad.

To formulate our manifesto, there was more than one Qurʾān, as Musaylima also revealed his own qurʾān. It is possible that other prophets also did so. There was more than one mosque (*masjīd*), since the followers of Abū ʿĀmir established their own (chapter eight), as did those of Abū Qays. So did the followers of Musaylima (chapter two). There was more than one Abrahamic *ḥanīf* monotheistic movement in the Ḥijāz and around the region, as some aforementioned figures assumed the same mission. None of these, however, survived. In the case of Musaylima, this was due to the fact that this prophet and followers were defeated by Khālid b. Walīd's forces at the battle of Yamāma pursuant to the caliph Abū Bakr. Musaylima's defeat, in turn, led to the diminishment of his cult and his followers, and the loss of their mosque, and the suppression of his qurʾān. It is likely that it was Abū Bakr who initiated the idea of imposing a single religion, Prophet, mosque, and Qurʾān upon the Ḥijāz. Later caliphs then followed his example. In fact, this policy—imposing a single version of the interpretation of Hanafite Abrahamic monotheistic religion on the Arabian peninsula—did not immediately work, as we read reports about Musaylima's followers who still recited their own qurʾān at the time of ʿUthmān (chapter two). Certainly, the complete Islamization of the Ḥijāz took place at a much later than the conventional Muslim accounts have indicated.

There was more than one Qur'ān, one *masjīd*, one Prophet, one Arab monotheistic movement; indeed, certain vital terms employed by Muslims did not originally belong to them exclusively. The terms *qur'ān, masjīd, rasūl, nabī, basmalla, Allah, raḥmān, salām* were evidently used by Musaylima, and perhaps also by other Arab prophets. What remains unclear is when exactly the Muslims' claims over these terms as their property exclusively began to bear fruit. This may have taken centuries and was accompanied by the growth of Islamic orthodoxy.

All in all, our study has performed a number of tasks outlined below. It has reconstructed the story (*sīra*) of Musaylima as a prophet in Yamāma, whose teachings contained in the fragments of his qur'ān show similarities to the early Meccan Islam. This study also covers Musaylima's predecessors in Yamāma (Hawdha and al-Aʿshā), companions (al-Rajjāl and Muḥkam), direct political rival (Thumāma), and other opponents (chapters five, six, and seven). The sources tell us that Musaylima, like Muḥammad in the early stage of his prophethood in Mecca, attempted to perform the hermeneutical task of blending Judaism and Christianity with the local values of Yamāma. Unlike what most Muslim authors believe, neither Muḥammad nor Musaylima imitated each other. Instead, each of the two served as a prophet and leader to his own people.

Our analysis have shown how the figure of Musaylima has become the 'myth of an enemy' in Muslim literature, in which he has turned to a 'mere symbol,' whose 'negative labels'—the arch-liar, the enemy of God, the adulterer, the one cursed by God, the imitator of Muḥammad, the false prophet, etc.— are still well preserved. Later *tafsīr* works, for instance, position Musaylima as a 'mere symbol' of anyone who acts against God and His messenger, regardless of time and space (chapter eight). Additionally, preserving his negative labels also serves as a 'defense mechanism' embodied in the doctrine of *khātam al-anbiyā'* (i.e. the sole prophethood of Muḥammad), which has been guarded by the caliphs *rāshidūn*, Umayyads, and ʿAbbasids respectively and later ʿulamā' (chapters four and eight).

This study also reclaims some fragments of Musaylima's 'qur'ān,' which we have read and compared with many early Meccan revelations of the Qur'ān (chapter nine). Some of these fragments preserve many important teachings of Musaylima—the concept of God, the concept of creation, the destiny of man, his duty (e.g. praying, fasting, and other commands and prohibitions), nature, and ethics (diet, sex, tribal life, etc). These fragments also employ diction, structure, and style with substantial similarities to those of the Meccan verses of the Qur'ān. This accordingly contradicts the idea that the Qur'ān employs a style with no similarity to other works contemporary to it. In fact, the early revelation of the Qur'ān employ the style of *kāhin*'s speeches, which Musaylima's verses also feature. This will broaden the context of the

emergence of Islam, its early stage of development, and the revelation of the Qur'ān,.

The following lessons deserve our reflection. One positive legacy that Musaylima left behind is the concept of co-existence among many prophets, to whom he encouraged his people to bear witness (chapters two, seven, and eleven). This is attested by the comment by the follower of Mujjāʿa, which also echoes the content of Q. 109: 6 cited above, a call which is still relevant to modern multicultural and pluralistic societies.

It is also worth contemplating the examples that many early caliphs, scholars, and philosophers set. That is, they boldly introduced reforms beyond the content of the Qur'ān and *ḥijāzī* tradition. In this vein, Gunther Lüling, in the English translation of his *Ur-Qur'ān*, challenges present-day Muslim society to also engage in such reforms. Lüling calls upon Muslims to rethink their own religious tradition beyond the content of the Qur'ān. History teaches us that early Muslims already did this. The Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs gave patronage to many scholars to write books of history, historiographies, biographies, stories of the prophets, and poetry whose materials are extra-Qur'ānic and extra-*ḥijāzī* (chapter three). Early Muslim historians also broadened the scope of prophethood, claiming that it did not belong exclusively to the Israelites, but also to the Arabs. Early philosophers included Greek philosophers as prophets (see prologue). These thinkers went boldly beyond the Qur'ān in their ideas. This step is inspiring, particularly for present-day Muslim intellectuals in that it implies that we should understand the Qur'ān within the context of a broader human history.

Unfortunately, all of these examples were buried by later waves of orthodoxy that have so far prevailed in Muslim society, an orthodoxy that has fanatically asserted a return to the literal text of the Qur'ān and *sunna*. As a result, many orthodox thinkers have felt threatened by such free-thinking, which they view as contradicting the Qur'ān and *sunna*.

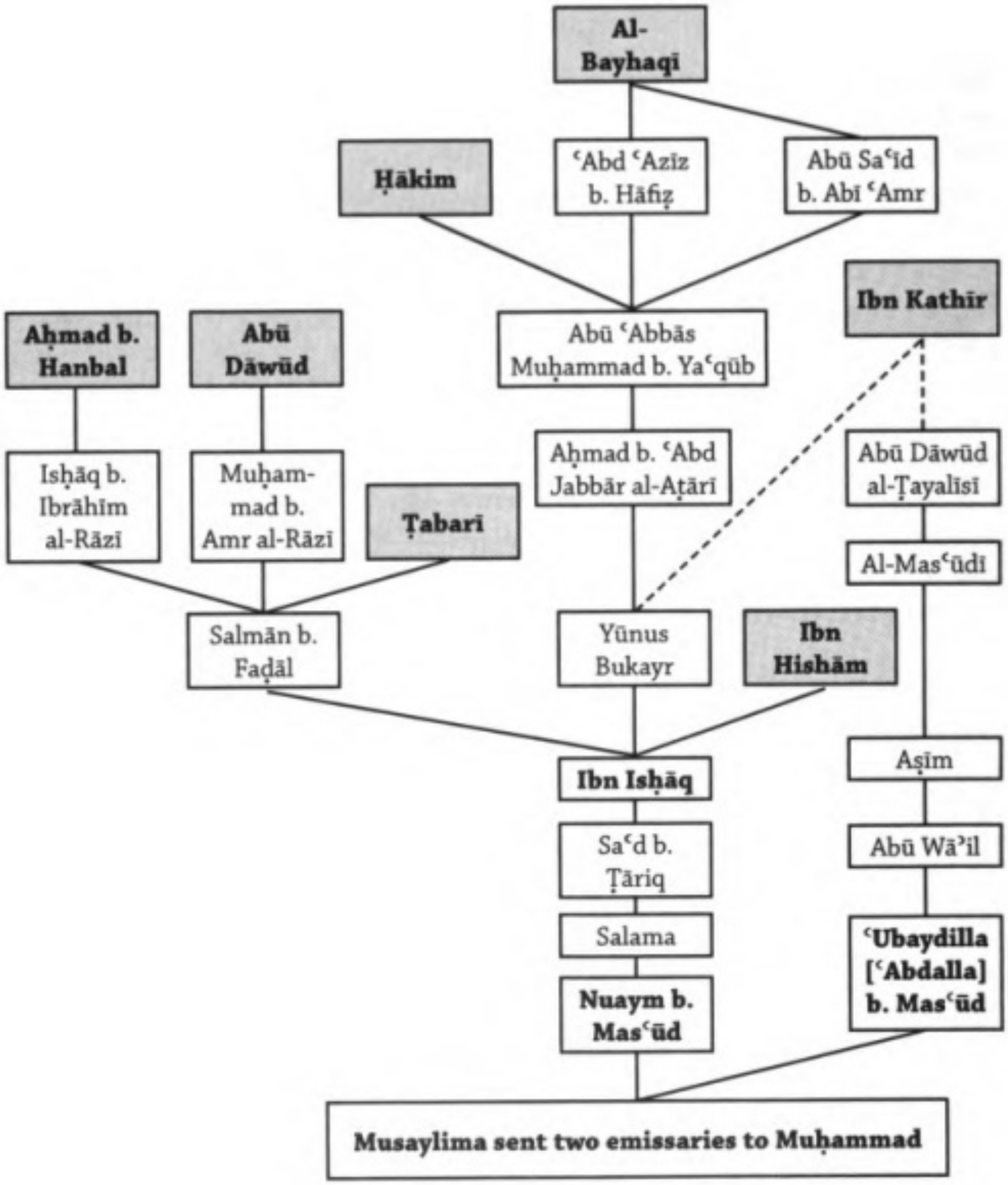
▸•◂

Appendix

Isnād Bundle

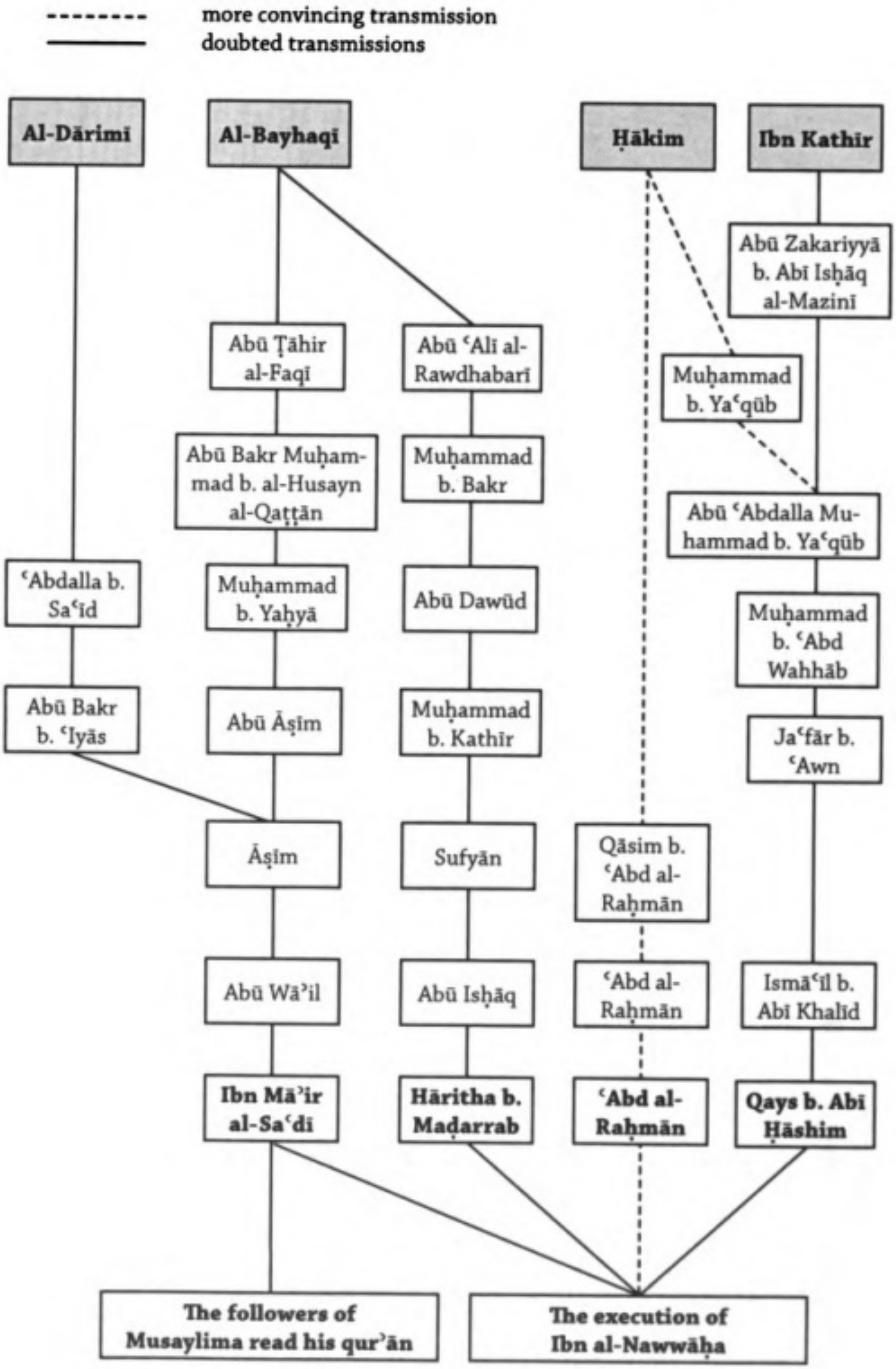
Isnād **2. 1. Chapter Two**
"Musaylima sent two emissaries to Muḥammad"

-------- through written version
——— through oral transmission

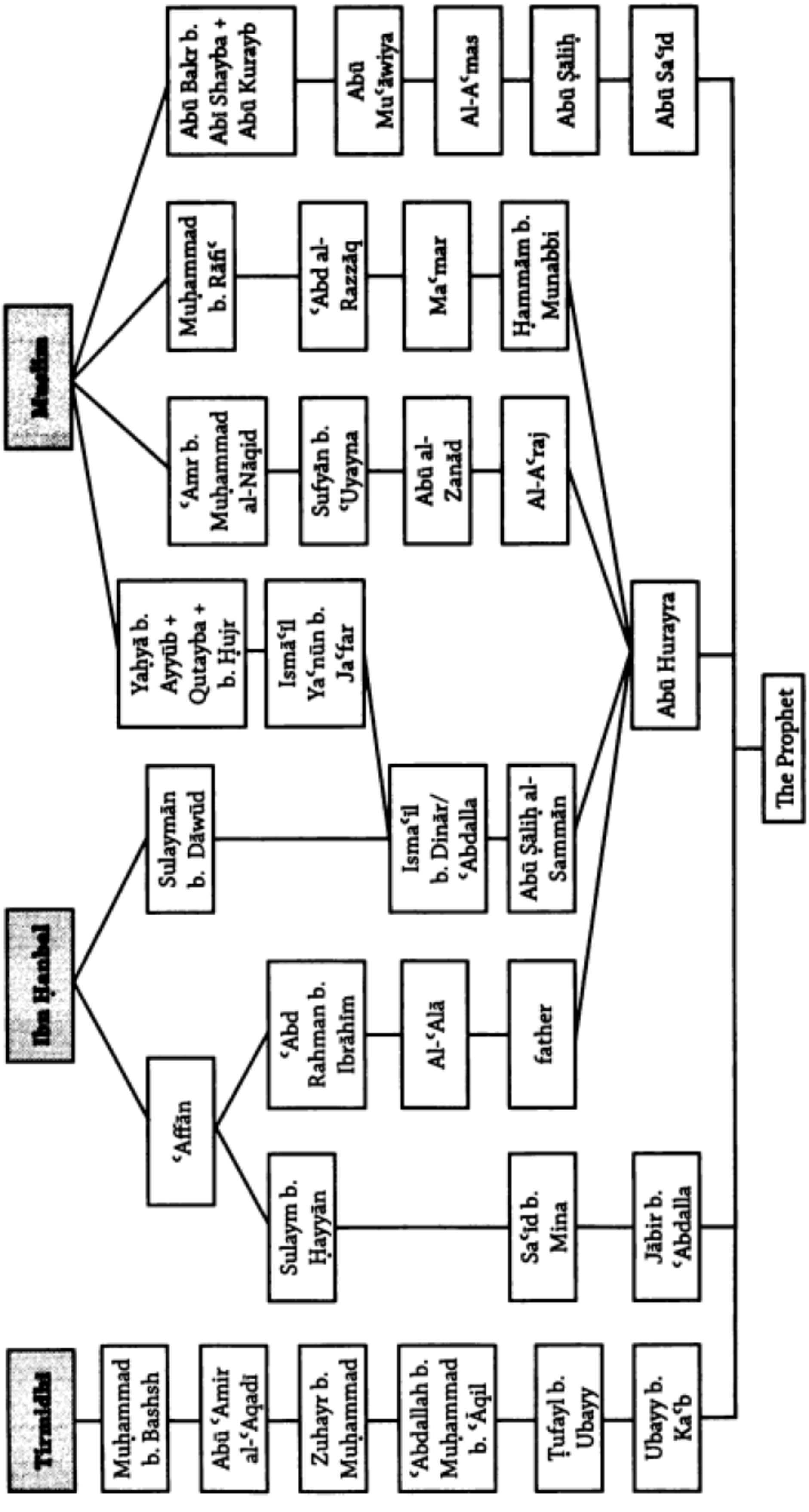


Isnād **2. 2. Chapter Two**

"The Execution of Ibn Nawwāḥa, a leader of Musaylima's followers"

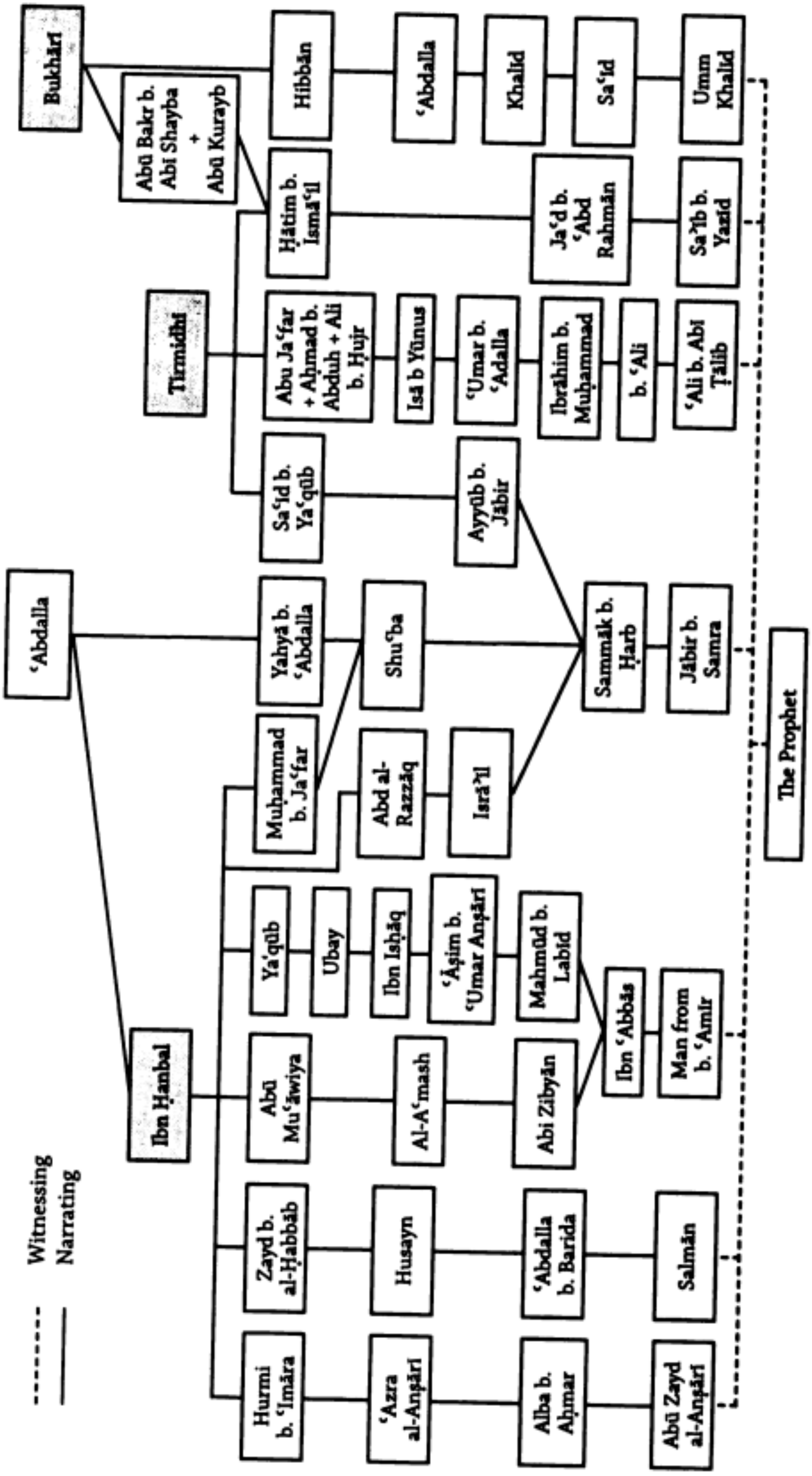


Isnād **4.1: Chapter Four**
***"Khātam* as a brick in a building"**



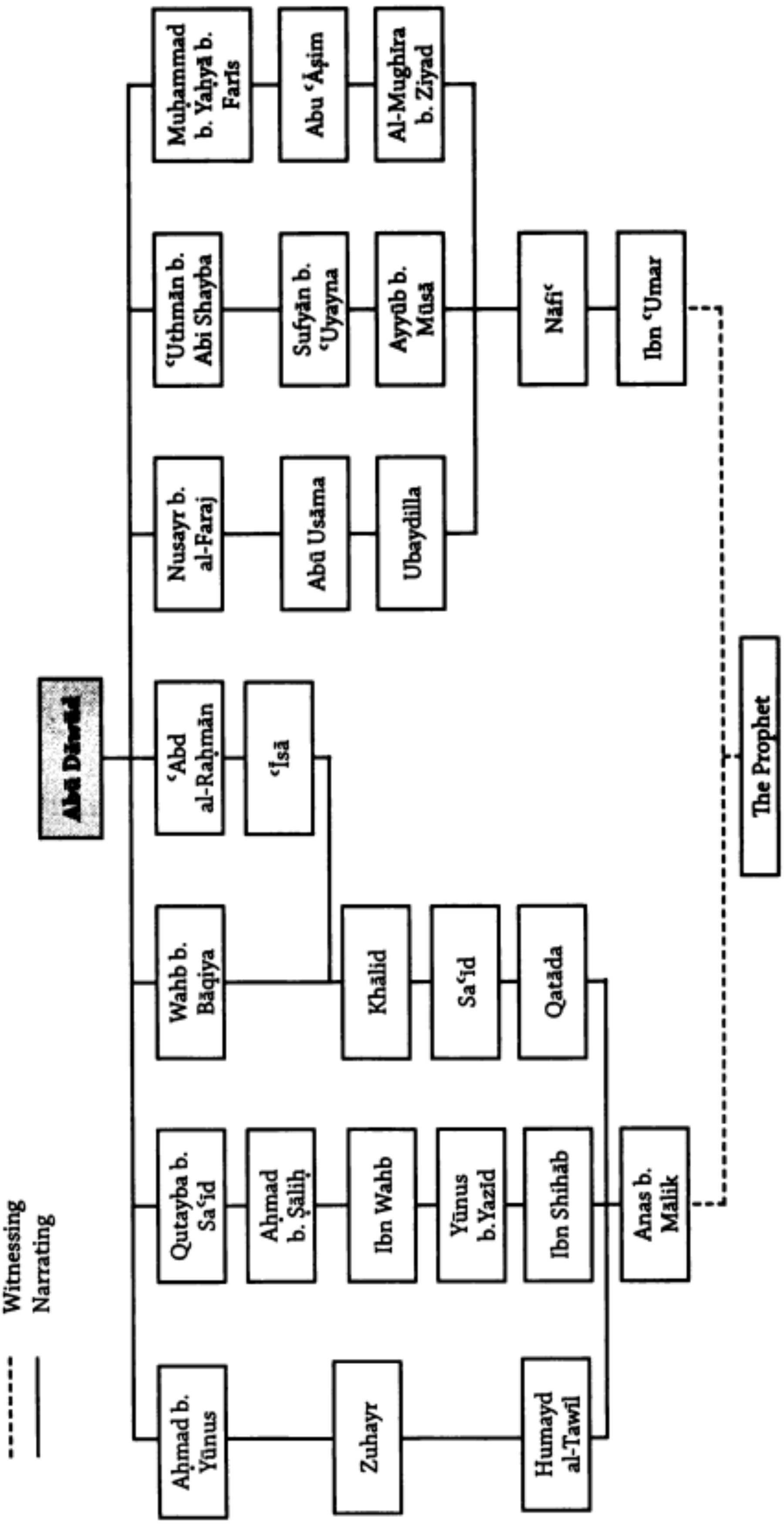
Isnād **4.2: Chapter Four**

"*Khātam* as a Birthmark"



Isnād **4.3: Chapter Four**

"*Khātam* as a Stamp or a Ring"



Isnād **9.1: Chapter Nine**

"Al-Ṭabarī's Transmission of Stanzas *Oaths A*, *Oaths B*, *Oaths C*, *Tribalism A*, and *Women*"

- In presenting the above stanzas attributed to Musaylima, al-Ṭabarī relies on the following transmissions: al-Sārī—Shuʿayb—Sayf—Ṭalḥa b. al-Aʿlam—ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr—ʿUthāl al-Ḥanafī, whose identities can be explained as follows.
- Al-Sārī's complete identity is given as al-Sārī b. Yaḥyā b. ʿIyās b. Harmala b. ʿIyās al-Shaybānī,[1] who appears quite often in al-Ṭabarī's account of many battles of *Ridda*.[2] His role here is significant in connecting al-Ṭabarī and Sayf b. ʿUmar.[3]
- Shuʿayb b. Ibrāhīm[4] and Ṭalḥa b. al-Aʿlam[5] both appear almost as often as al-Sārī in transmitting the accounts of the battles.
- ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr appears in other transmissions of no less than four accounts of the *Ridda* War. The formula of transmission appears to be consistent in the following pattern: al-Sārī—Shuʿayb—Sayf—Ṭalḥa—ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr. Two transmissions, which relay the story of the battle in Yamāma[6] and the story of Musaylima in particular, end with the figure of ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr. One of the transmissions suggests that ʿUbayd must have participated in or at least witnessed the battle of Yamāma. In another transmission, however, ʿUbayd relies on ʿUthāl al-Ḥanafī who served as the first narrator. This leads us to arrive at a rather different conclusion that ʿUbayd does not serve as a witness to

1 Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1325/1907) vol. 3, 460-461.

2 See the index provided by Donner in *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, The Conquest of Arabia*, trans. F. M. Donner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). More on the pattern of transmission of al-Sārī—Sayf—Ṭabarī; see Franz Rosenthal, "Introduction," *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, General introduction, and, From the Creation to the Flood*, trans. F. Rosenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989) 6; Sezgin, *GAS* vol. 1, 311. It has been argued that Al-Ṭabarī plausibly had an access to Sārī's writing version and it is rather doubtful that both have ever met.

3 On him see chapter two, n. 36.

4 He is perhaps Shuʿayb b. Ibrāhīm al-Tamīmī; see Sezgin, *GAS* index, 204; vol. 1, 312.

5 It is rather hard to elucidate the identity of Ṭalḥa b. al-Aʿlam. One may relate this figure to either Ṭalḥa b. ʿAbdalla b. ʿAwf al-Zuhrī (*GAS* index 210, vol. 2, 416; al-Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 5, 19-20) or Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbaydilla al-Tamīmī (Sezgin, *GAS* index, 210; vol. 5, 420, and vol. 8, 171; al-Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb* vol. 5, 20-22). The first Ṭalḥa, a nephew (*ibn akhī*) of ʿAbdarraḥmān b. ʿAwf, is said to have served as a jurist (*qāḍī*). It stands to reason, however, to assume him to be Ṭalḥa as Shuʿayb b. Ibrāhīm al-Tamīmī or simply Ṭalḥa al-Tamīmī, whose tribal affiliation the Tamīm was the neighbors and competitors to the Ḥanīfa. If this is not the case, then this Ṭalḥa is simply unknown.

6 For the first account, see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1962) vol. 3, 291; trans. Donner, *The History* 120. For the second account, see Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 292; trans. Donner, *History* 122.

the event. Similarly, there is yet another report in which ʿUbayd does not act as a witness, but instead relies on an unknown man (*ʿan rajul minhum*).[7]

- Al-Asqalānī lists at least three persons named ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr in the *Tahdhīb*. The first one is ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr b. Qatāda b. Saʿīd b. ʿĀmir b. Jandaʿ b. Layth (d. 68 H), a Successor, who is said to have had special relation with [ʿAbdalla] b. ʿUmar.[8] This ʿUbayd is reported to have been born during the lifetime of the Prophet and to have seen the Prophet.[9] Oddly enough, his name does not appear in the biographies of Companions (*Iṣāba*) of al-Asqalānī, which prompts us to doubt his status as a Companion of the Prophet. Alternatively, if we position him as a Successor, it is hard to accept that he already participated in the Battle of Yamāma, due to the fact that he must have been born towards the end of the Prophet's life or shortly after the Prophet's death. The second ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr is said to have been a *mawlā* (slave) of Ibn ʿAbbās, about whom is known too little, except that he transmits only a single tradition from Ibn ʿAbbās.[10] Still, it is possible that ʿUbayd was a son of ʿUmayr b. al-Ḍabī al-Yashkūrī, whose father is said to have hidden his faith during the political rise of Musaylima and participated in many battles after the Battle of Yamāma (see chapter six).
- At the end of the above transmission, the name of ʿUthāl al-Ḥanafī from Yamāma appears as the first source. One may be confused upon hearing this name, as Ibn Ḥajar's information on the identity of this person is rather obscure.[11] It may well be that the name refers to an unspecified person in the way that Fūlan is often used in the Arabic language. If so, mentioning ʿUthāl here merely functions to fill the gap when somebody is unknown. In this sense, this name appears twice in the story of Musaylima: in the two emissaries (see chapter two) and in the poem lampooning the role of al-Rajjāl and Muḥkam.[12]

7 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh* vol. 3, 286; trans. Donner, *History* 112.

8 *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 71.

9 Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, ed. Bashar ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Muʾassasa al-Risāla, 1413/1992) vol. 19, 323.

10 *Tahdhīb* vol. 7, 72.

11 Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) vol. 1, 30. This figure is either ʿUthāl b. Nuʿmān or ʿUthāl b. Thumāma.

12 The poems mentions "O daughter of Ūthal...", a name referring to no one. See al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-ridda, Riwāya aḥmad b. muḥammad b. aʿtham al-kūfī* (d. 314), ed. Yaḥyā al-Juburī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990/1410) 110. See also chapter six n. 51.

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The contributions in this volume examine literary and other texts as well as cultural and political discourses in relation to issues of identity formation and dis-formation, of self and society and of the socially local within the global. All these issues come into play through the exploration of the fantasmatic space of mutual mis-recognition and mythmaking between coloniser and colonised, between 'Africa' and 'Europe'.

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This work claims that Musaylima served as a prophet for his own people in Yamama in more or less the same way as the Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca and Medina. However, unlike Islam, Musaylima's religious movement did not survive. Here, a complete story of Musaylima – his claim of prophethood, *qur'ān* (reading), religious activities, followers, opponents, and defeat – is reconstructed. A critical reading of the sources that contain the accounts of Musaylima is performed. Additionally, this study reveals that the remaining fragments of Musaylima's *qur'ān* bear substantial similarities to the early Meccan verses of the *Qur'ān* – in terms of diction, style, and pattern.
To formulate the findings of this study, there was more than one prophet in the sixth-seventh century of the Arabian peninsula, as Umayya b. Abī Ṣalt, Abū 'Āmir, Tulayḥa, Sajaḥ, Aswad, and Musaylima claimed prophethood. There was more than one *qur'ān*, as Musaylima also revealed his own *qur'ān*. It is possible that other prophets also did so. There was more than one mosque (*masjid*), since the followers of Abū 'Āmir established their own, as did those of Abū Qays. So did the followers of Musaylima. There was more than one Abrahamic *ḥanīf* monotheistic movement in the Ḥijaz and around the region, as some figures assumed the same mission.

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